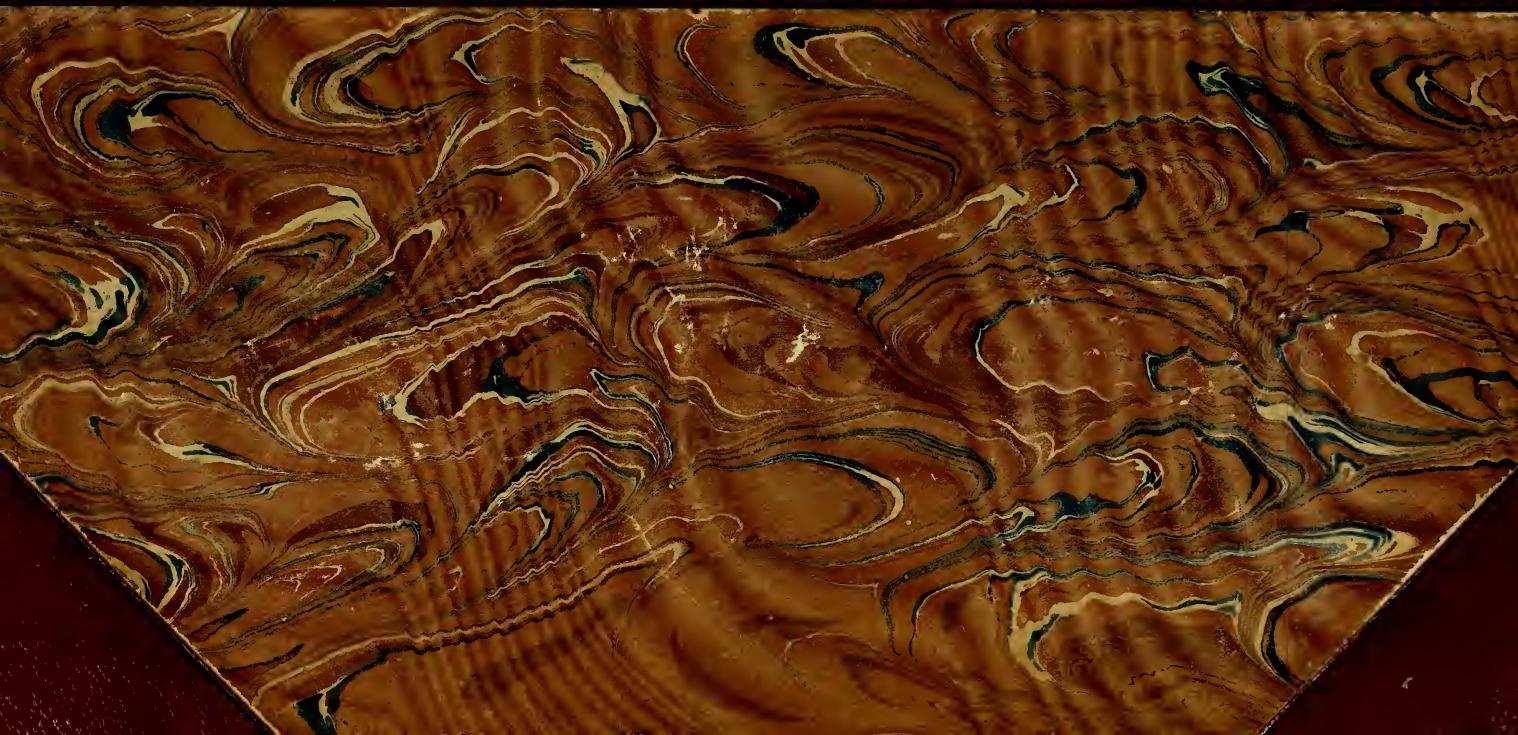

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"She went down hereabouts"

Original Etching

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FOUL PLAY

—

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH

BY

CHARLES READE, D. C. L.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FOUL PLAY

PAGE

"She went down hereabouts" . . . *Frontispiece*

One day, as he was rolling the grass upon the lawn 27

"Here is the spot, then," said General Rolleston 162

Hazel threw his captive up in the air . . . 331

"She is found! she is found!" he roared: "read that!" 410

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE

A young woman and a very old man 11

Snatched the letter rudely from her 175

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FOUL PLAY.

CHAPTER I.

THERE are places which appear at first sight inaccessible to romance: and such a place was Mr. Wardlaw's dining room in Russell Square. It was very large, had sickly green walls, picked out with aldermen, full length; heavy maroon curtains; mahogany chairs; a turkey carpet an inch thick: and was lighted with wax candles only.

In the centre, bristling and gleaming with silver and glass, was a round table, at which fourteen could have dined comfortably; and at opposite sides of this table sat two gentlemen, who looked as neat, grave, precise, and unromantic, as the place: Merchant Wardlaw, and his son.

Wardlaw senior was an elderly man, tall, thin, iron-gray, with a round head, a short thick neck, a good brown eye, a square jowl that betokened resolution, and a complexion so sallow as to be almost cadaverous. Hard as iron: but a certain stiff dignity and respectability sat upon him, and became him.

Arthur Wardlaw resembled his father in figure, but his mother in face. He had, and has, hay-colored hair, a forehead singularly white and delicate, pale blue eyes, largish ears, finely chiselled features, the under lip much

shorter than the upper; his chin oval and pretty, but somewhat receding; his complexion beautiful. In short, what nineteen people out of twenty would call a handsome young man, and think they had described him.

Both the Wardlaws were in full dress, according to the invariable custom of the house; and sat in a dead silence, that seemed natural to the great, sober room.

This, however, was not for want of a topic; on the contrary, they had a matter of great importance to discuss, and in fact this was why they dined *tête-à-tête:* but their tongues were tied for the present; in the first place, there stood in the middle of the table an épergne, the size of a Putney laurel tree; neither Wardlaw could well see the other, without craning out his neck like a rifleman from behind his tree: and then there were three live suppressors of confidential intercourse, two gorgeous footmen, and a sombre, sublime, and, in one word, episcopal butler; all three went about as softly as cats after a robin, and conjured one plate away, and smoothly insinuated another, and seemed models of grave discretion; but were known to be all ears, and bound by a secret oath to carry down each crumb of dialogue to the servants' hall, for curious dissection, and boisterous ridicule.

At last, however, those three smug hypocrites retired, and, by good luck, transferred their suffocating épergne to the sideboard; so then father and son looked at one another with that conscious air which naturally precedes a topic of interest; and Wardlaw senior invited his son to try a certain decanter of rare old port, by way of preliminary.

While the young man fills his glass, hurl we in his antecedents.

At school till fifteen, and then clerk in his father's office till twenty-two, and showed an aptitude so

remarkable, that John Wardlaw, who was getting tired, determined, sooner or later, to put the reins of government into his hands. But he conceived a desire that the future head of his office should be a university man. So he announced his resolution, and to Oxford went young Wardlaw, though he had not looked at Greek or Latin for seven years. He was, however, furnished with a private tutor, under whom he recovered lost ground rapidly. The Reverend Robert Penfold was a first-class man, and had the gift of teaching. The house of Wardlaw had peculiar claims on him, for he was the son of old Michael Penfold, Wardlaw's cashier; he learned from young Wardlaw the stake he was playing for, and, instead of merely giving him one hour's lecture per day, as he did to his other pupils, he used to come to his rooms at all hours, and force him to read, by reading with him. He also stood his friend in a serious emergency. Young Wardlaw, you must know, was blessed or cursed, with Mimicry; his powers in that way really seemed to have no limit, for he could imitate any sound you liked with his voice, and any form with his pen or pencil. Now, we promise you, he was one man under his father's eye, and another down at Oxford; so, one night, this gentleman, being warm with wine, opens his window, and, seeing a group of undergraduates chattering and smoking in the quadrangle, imitates the peculiar grating tones of Mr. Champion, vice-president of the college, and gives them various reasons why they ought to disperse to their rooms and study. "But, perhaps," says he, in conclusion, "you are too blind drunk to read Bosh in crooked letters by candle-light? In that case ——" And he then gave them some very naughty advice how to pass the evening, still in the exact tones of Mr. Champion, who was a very, very strict moralist; and this unexpected sally of wit caused

shrieks of laughter, and mightily tickled all the hearers, except Champion ipse, who was listening, and disapproving, at another window. He complained to the president. Then the ingenious Wardlaw, not having come down to us in a direct line from Bayard, committed a great mistake — he denied it.

It was brought home to him, and the president, who had laughed in his sleeve at the practical joke, looked very grave at the falsehood; Rustication was talked of, and even Expulsion. Then Wardlaw came sorrowfully to Penfold, and said to him, "I must have been awfully cut, for I don't remember all that; I had been wining at Christchurch. I do remember slanging the fellows, but how can I tell what I said? I say, old fellow, it will be a bad job for me if they expel me, or even rusticate me; my father will never forgive me; I shall be his clerk, but never his partner; and then he will find out what a lot I owe down here. I'm done for! I'm done for!"

Penfold uttered not a word, but grasped his hand, and went off to the president, and said his pupil had wined at Christchurch, and could not be expected to remember minutely. Mimicry was, unfortunately, a habit with him. He then pleaded for the milder construction, with such zeal and eloquence, that the high-minded scholar he was addressing admitted that construction was *possible*, and therefore must be received. So the affair ended in a written apology to Mr. Champion, which had all the smoothness and neatness of a merchant's letter. Arthur Wardlaw was already a master in that style.

Six months after this, and one fortnight before the actual commencement of our tale, Arthur Wardlaw, well crammed by Penfold, went up for his final examination, throbbing with anxiety. He passed; and was so grateful to his tutor that, when the advowson of a small living

near Oxford came into the market, he asked Wardlaw senior to lend Robert Penfield a sum of money, much more than was needed; and Wardlaw senior declined without a moment's hesitation.

This slight sketch will serve as a key to the dialogue it has postponed, and to subsequent incidents.

"Well, Arthur, and so you have really taken your degree?"

"No, sir; but I have passed my examination: the degree follows as a matter of course — that is a mere question of fees."

"Oh, then now I have something to say to you. Try one more glass of the '47 port. Stop; you'll excuse me; I am a man of business; I don't doubt your word; Heaven forbid! but, do you happen to have any document you can produce, in further confirmation of what you state; namely, that you have passed your final examination at the University?"

"Certainly, sir;" replied young Wardlaw. "My Testamur."

"What is that?"

The young gentleman put his hand in his pocket, and produced his Testamur, or "We bear witness;" a short printed document in Latin, which may be thus translated: —

We bear witness that Arthur Wardlaw, of St. Luke's College, has answered our questions in humane letters.

GEORGE RICHARDSON,
ARTHUR SMYTHE,
EDWARD MERIVALE,
Examiners.

Wardlaw senior took it, laid it beside him on the table, inspected it with his double eye-glass, and not knowing a word of Latin, was mightily impressed, and

his respect for his son rose forty or forty-five per cent.

"Very well, sir;" said he. "Now listen to me. Perhaps it was an old man's fancy; but I have often seen in the world what a stamp these universities put upon a man. To send you back from commerce to Latin and Greek, at two-and-twenty, was trying you rather hard; it was trying you doubly; your obedience, and your ability into the bargain. Well, sir, you have stood the trial, and I am proud of you. And so now it is my turn: from this day and from this hour, look on yourself as my partner in the old established house of Wardlaw. My balance-sheet shall be prepared immediately, and the partnership deed drawn. You will enter on a flourishing concern, sir; and you will virtually conduct it, in written communication with me; for I have had five-and-forty years of it: and then my liver, you know! Watson advises me strongly to leave my desk, and try country air, and rest from business and its cares."

He paused a moment; and the young man drew a long breath, like one who was in the act of being relieved of some terrible weight.

As for the old gentleman, he was not observing his son just then, but thinking of his own career: a certain expression of pain and regret came over his features; but he shook it off with manly dignity. "Come, come," said he, "this is the law of Nature, and must be submitted to with a good grace. Wardlaw junior, fill your glass." At the same time he stood up and said stoutly, "The setting sun drinks to the rising sun;" but could not maintain that artificial style, and ended with "God bless you, my boy, and may you stick to business; avoid speculation, as I have done; and so hand the concern down healthy to your son, as my father there

(pointing to a picture) handed it down to me, and I to you."

His voice wavered slightly in uttering this benediction; but only for a moment: he then sat quietly down, and sipped his wine composedly.

Not so the other: the color came and went violently all the time his father was speaking, and, when he ceased, he sank into his chair with another sigh deeper than the last, and two half-hysterical tears came to his pale eyes.

But presently, feeling he was expected to say something, he struggled against all this mysterious emotion, and faltered out that he should not fear the responsibility, if he might have constant recourse to his father for advice.

"Why, of course," was the reply. "My country house is but a mile from the station: you can telegraph for me in any case of importance."

"When would you wish me to commence my new duties?"

"Let me see; it will take six weeks to prepare a balance-sheet, such as I could be content to submit to an incoming partner. Say two months."

Young Wardlaw's countenance fell.

"Meantime you shall travel on the Continent, and enjoy yourself."

"Thank you," said young Wardlaw, mechanically, and fell into a brown study.

The room now returned to what seemed its natural state. And its silence continued until it was broken from without.

A sharp knocking was heard at the street-door, and resounded across the marble hall.

The Wardlaws looked at one another in some little surprise.

"I have invited nobody," said the elder.

Some time elapsed, and then a footman made his appearance, and brought in a card.

"Mr. Christopher Adams."

Now that Mr. Christopher Adams should call on John Wardlaw, in his private room, at nine o'clock in the evening, seemed to that merchant irregular, presumptuous, and monstrous. "Tell him he will find me at my place of business to-morrow, as usual," said he, knitting his brows.

The footman went off with this message; and, soon after, raised voices were heard in the hall, and the episcopal butler entered the room with an injured countenance.

"He says he *must* see you; he is in great anxiety."

"Yes, I am in great anxiety," said a quavering voice at his elbow; and Mr. Adams actually pushed by the butler, and stood, hat in hand, in those sacred precincts. "Pray excuse me, sir," said he, "but it is very serious; I can't be easy in my mind till I have put you to a question."

"This is very extraordinary conduct, sir," said Mr. Wardlaw. "Do you think I do business here, and at all hours?"

"Oh no, sir; it is my own business. I am come to ask you a very serious question. I couldn't wait till morning with such a doubt on my mind."

"Well, sir, I repeat this is irregular and extraordinary; but as you are here, pray what is the matter?" He then dismissed the lingering butler with a look. Mr. Adams cast uneasy glances on young Wardlaw.

"Oh," said the elder, "you can speak before him. This is my partner; that is to say, he will be as soon as the balance-sheet can be prepared, and the deed

drawn. Wardlaw junior, this is Mr. Adams, a very respectable bill discounter."

The two men bowed to each other, and Arthur Wardlaw sat down motionless.

"Sir, did you draw a note of hand to-day?" inquired Adams of the elder merchant.

"I dare say I did. Did you discount one signed by me?"

"Yes, sir, we did."

"Well, sir, you have only to present it at maturity. Wardlaw and Son will provide for it, I dare say." This with the lofty nonchalance of a rich man, who had never broken an engagement in his life.

"Ah, that I know they will if it is all right; but suppose it is not?"

"What d'ye mean?" asked Wardlaw, with some astonishment.

"Oh, nothing, sir. It bears your signature, that is good for twenty times the amount; and it is indorsed by your cashier. Only what makes me a little uneasy, your bills used to be always on your own forms, and so I told my partner: he discounted it. Gentlemen, I wish you would just look at it."

"Of course we will look at it. Show it Arthur first; his eyes are younger than mine."

Mr. Adams took out a large bill-book, extracted the note of hand, and passed it across the table to Wardlaw junior. He took it up with a sort of shiver, and bent his head very low over it; then handed it back in silence.

Adams took it to Wardlaw senior, and laid it before him by the side of Arthur's Testamur.

The merchant inspected it with his glasses.

"The writing is mine, apparently."

"I am very glad of it," said the bill-broker eagerly.

"Stop a bit," said Mr. Wardlaw. "Why, what is this? For two thousand pounds! and, as you say, not my form. I have signed no note for two thousand pounds this week. Dated yesterday. You have not cashed it, I hope?"

"I am sorry to say my partner has."

"Well, sir, not to keep you in suspense, the thing is not worth the stamp it is written on."

"Mr. Wardlaw! — Sir! — Good heavens! Then it is as I feared. It is a forgery."

"I should be puzzled to find any other name for it. You need not look so pale, Arthur. We can't help some clever scoundrel imitating our hands; and as for you, Adams, you ought to have been more cautious."

"But, sir, your cashier's name is Penfold," faltered the holder, clinging to a straw. "May he not have drawn — is the indorsement forged as well?"

Mr. Wardlaw examined the back of the bill, and looked puzzled. "No," said he. "My cashier's name is Michael Penfold, but this is indorsed 'Robert Penfold.' Do you hear, Arthur? Why, what is the matter with you? You look like a ghost. I say there is your tutor's name at the back of this forged note. This is very strange. Just look, and tell me who wrote these two words 'Robert Penfold.'"

Young Wardlaw took the document, and tried to examine it calmly, but it shook visibly in his hand, and a cold moisture gathered on his brow. His pale eyes roved to and fro in a very remarkable way; and he was so long before he said anything, that both the other persons present began to eye him with wonder.

At last he faltered out, "This 'Robert Penfold' seems to me very like his own handwriting. But then the rest of the writing is equally like yours, sir. I am sure Robert Penfold never did anything wrong. Mr. Adams,

pray oblige *me*. Let this go no further till I have seen him, and asked him whether he indorsed it."

"Now don't you be in a hurry," said the elder Wardlaw. "The first question is, who received the money?"

Mr. Adams replied that it was a respectable looking man, a young clergyman.

"Ah!" said Wardlaw, with a world of meaning.

"Father!" said young Wardlaw, imploringly, "for my sake, say no more to-night. Robert Penfold is incapable of a dishonest act."

"It becomes your years to think so, young man. But I have lived long enough to see what crimes respectable men are betrayed into in the hour of temptation. And, now I think of it, this Robert Penfold is in want of money. Did he not ask me for a loan of two thousand pounds? Was not that the very sum? Can't you answer me? Why, the application came through you."

Receiving no reply from his son, but a sort of agonized stare, he took out his pencil and wrote down Robert Penfold's address. This he handed the bill-broker, and gave him some advice in a whisper, which Mr. Christopher Adams received with a profusion of thanks, and bustled away, leaving Wardlaw senior excited and indignant, Wardlaw junior ghastly pale, and almost stupefied.

Scarcely a word was spoken for some minutes, and then the younger man broke out suddenly. "Robert Penfold is the best friend I ever had; I should have been expelled but for him, and I should never have earned that Testamur but for him."

The old merchant interrupted him. "You exaggerate; but to tell you the truth, I am sorry now I did not lend him the money you asked for. For, mark my words, in a moment of temptation, that miserable young man has forged my name, and will be convicted of the felony, and punished accordingly."

"No, no; oh, God forbid!" shrieked young Wardlaw. "I couldn't bear it. If he did, he must have intended to replace it. I must see him; I will see him directly." He got up all in a hurry, and was going to Penfold to warn him, and get him out of the way till the money should be replaced. But his father started up at the same moment and forbade him, in accents that he had never yet been able to resist.

"Sit down, sir, this instant," said the old man, with terrible sternness. "Sit down, I say, or you will never be a partner of mine. Justice must take its course. What business and what right have we to protect a felon? I would not take *your* part if you were one. Indeed it is too late now, for the detectives will be with him before you could reach him. I gave Adams his address."

At this last piece of information Wardlaw junior leaned his head on the table, and groaned aloud, and a cold perspiration gathered in beads upon his white forehead.

CHAPTER II.

That same evening sat over their tea, in Norfolk Street, Strand, another couple, who were also father and son; but, in this pair, the Wardlaws were reversed. Michael Penfold was a reverend, gentle creature, with white hair, blue eyes, and great timidity; why, if a stranger put to him a question, he used to look all round the room before he ventured to answer.

Robert, his son, was a young man, with a large brown eye, a mellow voice, square shoulders, and a prompt and vigorous manner. Cricketer. Scholar. Parson.

They were talking hopefully together over a living Robert was going to buy; it was near Oxford, he said, and would not prevent his continuing to take pupils.

"But, father," said he, "it will be a place to take my wife to if I ever have one; and, meantime, I hope you will run down now and then, Saturday to Monday."

"That I will, Robert. Ah! how proud *she* would have been to hear you preach; it was always her dream, poor thing."

"Let us think she *can* hear me," said Robert. "And I have got *you* still; the proceeds of this living will help me to lodge you more comfortably."

"You are very good, Robert; I would rather see you spend it upon yourself; but, dear me, what a manager you must be to dress so beautifully as you do, and send your old father presents as you do, and yet put by fourteen hundred pounds to buy this living."

"You are mistaken, sir, I have only saved four hundred; the rest — but that is a secret for the present."

"Oh, I am not inquisitive: I never was."

They then chatted about things of no importance whatever, and the old gentleman was just lighting his candle to go to bed, when a visitor was ushered into the room.

The Penfolds looked a little surprised, but not much. They had no street door all to themselves; no liveried dragons to interpose between them and unseasonable or unwelcome visitors.

The man was well dressed, with one exception: he wore a gold chain. He had a hooked nose, and a black piercing eye. He stood at the door and observed every person and thing in the room minutely, before he spoke a word.

Then he said quietly, "Mr. Michael Penfold, I believe."

"At your service, sir."

"And Mr. Robert Penfold."

"I am Robert Penfold. What is your business?"

"Pray is the 'Robert Penfold' at the back of this note your writing?"

"Certainly it is; they would not cash it without that."

"Oh, you got the money, then?"

"Of course I did."

"You have not parted with it, have you?"

"No."

"All the better." He then turned to Michael and looked at him earnestly a moment. "The fact is, sir," said he, "there is a little irregularity about this bill, which must be explained, or your son might be called on to refund the cash."

"Irregularity about — a bill?" cried Michael Penfold, in dismay. "Who is the drawer? Let me see it. Oh, dear me, something wrong about a bill indorsed by you, Robert?" and the old man began to shake piteously.

"Why, father," said Robert, "what are you afraid of?

If the bill is irregular, I can but return the money. It is in the house."

"The best way will be for Mr. Robert Penfold to go at once with me to the bill-broker; he lives but a few doors off. And you, sir, must stay here, and be responsible for the funds, till we return."

Robert Penfold took his hat directly, and went off with this mysterious visitor.

They had not gone many steps, when Robert's companion stopped, and, getting in front of him, said, "We can settle this matter here." At the same time a policeman crossed the way, and joined them; and another man, who was in fact a policeman in plain clothes, emerged from a doorway and stood at Robert Penfold's back.

The detective, having thus surrounded him, threw off disguise. "My man," said he, "I ought to have done this job in your house. But I looked at the worthy old gentleman, and his gray hairs. I thought I'd spare him all I could. I have a warrant to arrest you for forgery."

"Forgery! arrest me for forgery!" said Robert Penfold, with some amazement, but little emotion; for he hardly seemed to take it in, in all its horrible significance.

The next moment, however, he turned pale, and almost staggered under the blow.

"We had better go to Mr. Wardlaw," said he. "I entreat you to go to him with me."

"Can't be done," said the detective. "Wardlaw has nothing to do with it. The bill is stopped. You are arrested by the gent that cashed it. Here is the warrant: will you go quietly with us, or must I put the darbies on?"

Robert was violently agitated. "There is no need to arrest me," he cried: "I shall not run from my accuser.

Hands off, I say. I'm a clergyman of the Church of England, and you shall not lay hands on me."

But one of the policemen did lay hands on him. Then the Rev. Robert Penfold shook him furiously off, and with one active bound, sprang into the middle of the road.

The officers went at him incautiously, and the head detective, as he rushed forward, received a heavy blow on the neck and jaw, that sounded along the street, and sent him rolling in the mud; this was followed by a quick succession of staggering facers, administered right and left on the eyes and noses of the subordinates. These, however, though bruised and bleeding, succeeded at last in grappling their man, and all came to the ground together, and there struggled furiously; every window in the street was open by this time, and at one the white hair and reverend face of Michael Penfold looked out on this desperate and unseemly struggle, with hands that beat the air in helpless agony, and inarticulate cries of terror.

The detective got up and sat upon Robert Penfold's chest; and at last the three forced the handcuffs upon him, and took him in a cab to the station-house.

Next day, before the magistrate, Wardlaw senior proved the note was a forgery, and Mr. Adams's partner swore to the prisoner as the person who had presented and indorsed the note. The officers attended, two with black eyes apiece, and one with his jaw bound up, and two sound teeth in his pocket, which had been driven from their sockets by the prisoner in his desperate attempt to escape. Their evidence hurt the prisoner, and the magistrate refused bail.

The Rev. Robert Penfold was committed to prison, to be tried at the Central Criminal Court on a charge of felony.

Wardlaw senior returned home, and told Wardlaw junior, who said not a word. He soon received a letter from Robert Penfold, which agitated him greatly, and he promised to go to the prison and see him.

But he never went.

He was very miserable, a prey to an inward struggle. He dared not offend his father on the eve of being made partner. Yet his heart bled for Robert Penfold.

He did what might perhaps have been expected from that pale eye and receding chin — he temporized. He said to himself, "Before that horrible trial comes on, I shall be the house of Wardlaw, and able to draw a check for thousands. I'll buy off Adams at any price, and hush up the whole matter."

So he hoped, and hoped. But the accountant was slow, the public prosecutor unusually quick, and, to young Wardlaw's agony, the partnership deed was not ready, when an imploring letter was put into his hands, urging him, by all that men hold sacred, to attend at the court as the prisoner's witness.

This letter almost drove young Wardlaw mad. He went to Adams, and entreated him not to carry the matter into court. But Adams was inexorable. He had got his money, but would be revenged for the fright.

Baffled here, young Wardlaw went down to Oxford and shut himself up in his own room, a prey to fear and remorse. He sported his oak, and never went out. All his exercise was that of a wild beast in its den, walking restlessly up and down.

But all his caution did not prevent the prisoner's solicitor from getting to him. One morning, at seven o'clock, a clerk slipped in at the heels of his scout, and coming to young Wardlaw's bedside, awoke him out of an uneasy slumber by serving him with a subpœna to appear as Robert Penfold's witness.

This last stroke finished him. His bodily health gave way under his mental distress. Gastric fever set in, and he was lying tossing and raving in delirium, while Robert Penfold was being tried at the Central Criminal Court.

The trial occupied six hours, and could easily be made rather interesting. But, for various reasons, with which it would not be good taste to trouble the reader, we decide to skim it.

The indictment contained two counts; one for forging the note of hand, the other for uttering it knowing it to be forged.

On the first count, the Crown was weak, and had to encounter the evidence of Undercliff, the distinguished expert, who swore that the hand which wrote "Robert Penfold" was not, in his opinion, the hand that had written the body of the instrument. He gave many minute reasons, in support of this; and nothing of any weight was advanced contra. The judge directed the jury to acquit the prisoner on that count.

But, on the charge of uttering, the evidence was clear, and, on the question of knowledge, it was, perhaps, a disadvantage to the prisoner that he was tried in England, and could not be heard in person, as he could have been in a foreign court; above all, his resistance to the officers eked out the presumption that he knew the note had been forged by some person or other, who was probably his accomplice.

The absence of his witness, Wardlaw junior, was severely commented on by his counsel; indeed, he appealed to the judge to commit the said Wardlaw for contempt of court. But Wardlaw senior was recalled, and swore that he had left his son in a burning fever, not expected to live; and declared, with genuine emotion, that nothing but a high sense of public duty had brought *him* hither from his dying son's bedside. He also told the court

that Arthur's inability to clear his friend had really been the first cause of his illness, from which he was not expected to recover.

The jury consulted together a long time; and, at last, brought in a verdict of "GUILTY;" but recommended him to mercy, on grounds which might fairly have been alleged in favor of his innocence; but, if guilty, rather aggravated his crime.

Then an officer of the court inquired, in a sort of chant or recitativo, whether the prisoner had anything to say why judgment should not be given in accordance with the verdict.

It is easy to divest words of their meaning by false intonation; and prisoners in general receive this bit of sing-song in dead silence. For why? the chant conveys no idea to their ears, and they would as soon think of *replying* to the notes of a cuckoo.

But the Rev. Robert Penfold was in a keen agony that sharpened all his senses; he caught the sense of the words in spite of the speaker, and clung wildly to the straw that monotonous machine held out. "My Lord! my Lord!" he cried, "I'll tell you the real reason why young Wardlaw is not here."

The judge put up his hand with a gesture that enforced silence: — "Prisoner," said he, "I cannot go back to facts; the jury have dealt with them. Judgment can be arrested only on grounds of law. On these you can be heard. But, if you have none to offer, you must be silent, and submit to your sentence." He then, after a slight pause, proceeded to point out the heinous character of the offence, but admitted there was one mitigating circumstance: and in conclusion, he condemned the culprit to five years' penal servitude.

At this the poor wretch uttered a cry of anguish that was fearful, and clutched the dock convulsively.

Now a prisoner rarely speaks to a judge without revolting him by bad law, or bad logic, or hot words. But this wild cry was innocent of all these, and went straight from the heart in the dock to the heart on the judgment seat. And so his lordship's voice trembled for a moment, and then became firm again, but solemn and humane. "But," said he, "my experience tells me this is your first crime, and may possibly be your last. I shall therefore use my influence that you may not be associated with more hardened criminals, but may be sent out of this country to another, where you may begin life afresh, and, in the course of years, efface this dreadful stain. Give me hopes of you; begin your repentance, where now you stand, by blaming yourself, and no other man. No man constrained you to utter a forged note, and to receive the money; it was found in your possession. For such an act there can be no defence in law, morality, or religion."

These words overpowered the culprit. He burst out crying with great violence.

But it did not last long. He became strangely composed all of a sudden; and said, "God forgive all concerned in this — but one — but one."

He then bowed respectfully, and like a gentleman, to the judge, and the jury, and walked out of the dock with the air of a man who had parted with emotion, and would march to the gallows now without flinching.

The counsel for the Crown required that the forged document should be impounded.

"I was about to make the same demand," said the prisoner's counsel.

The judge snubbed them both, and said it was a matter of course.

Robert Penfold spent a year in separate confinement, and then, to cure him of its salutary effect (if any) was

sent on board the hulk "Vengeance," and was herded with the greatest miscreants in creation. They did not reduce him to their level, but they injured his mind; and, before half his sentence had expired, he sailed for a penal colony, a man with a hot coal in his bosom, a creature embittered, poisoned; hoping little, believing little, fearing little, and hating much.

He took with him the prayer-book his mother had given him when he was ordained deacon. But he seldom read beyond the fly-leaf: there the poor lady had written at large her mother's heart, and her pious soul aspiring heavenwards for her darling son. This, when all seemed darkest, he would sometimes run to with moist eyes; for he was sure of his mother's love, but almost doubted the justice of his God.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Wardlaw went down to his son, and nursed him. He kept the newspapers from him, and, on his fever abating, had him conveyed by easy stages to the seaside, and then sent him abroad.

The young man obeyed in gloomy silence. He never asked after Robert Penfold now — never mentioned his name. He seemed, somehow, thankful to be controlled, mind and body.

But, before he had been abroad a month, he wrote for leave to return home, and to throw himself into business. There was, for once, a nervous impatience in his letters, and his father, who pitied him deeply, and was more than ever inclined to reward and indulge him, yielded readily enough, and, on his arrival, signed the partnership deed, and Polonius-like, gave him much good counsel, and then retired to his country-seat.

At first, he used to run up every three days, and examine the day-book and ledger, and advise his junior; but these visits soon became fewer, and at last he did little more than correspond occasionally.

Arthur Wardlaw held the reins, and easily paid his Oxford debts out of the assets of the firm. Not being happy in his mind, he threw himself into commerce with feverish zeal, and very soon extended the operations of the house.

One of his first acts of authority was to send for Michael Penfold into his room. Now, poor old Michael, ever since his son's misfortune, as he called it, had crept to his desk like a culprit, expecting every day to be

discharged. When he received the summons, he gave a sigh, and went slowly to the young merchant.

Arthur Wardlaw looked up at his entrance, then looked down again, and said coldly:

"Mr. Penfold, you have been a faithful servant to us many years; I raise your salary fifty pounds a year, and you will keep the ledger."

The old man was dumbfounded at first, and then began to give vent to his surprise and gratitude; but Wardlaw cut him short, almost fiercely. "There, there, there," said he, without raising his eyes, "let me hear no more about it, and, above all, never speak to me of that cursed business. It was no fault of yours, nor mine neither. There — go — I want no thanks. Do you hear? leave me, Mr. Penfold, if you please."

The old man bowed low and retired, wondering much at his employer's goodness, and a little at his irritability.

Wardlaw junior's whole soul was given to business night and day, and he soon became known for a very ambitious and rising merchant. But, by-and-by, ambition had to encounter a rival in his heart. He fell in love; deeply in love; and with a worthy object.

The young lady was the daughter of a distinguished officer, whose merits were universally recognized, but not rewarded in proportion. Wardlaw's suit was favorably received by the father, and the daughter gradually yielded to an attachment, the warmth, sincerity, and singleness of which were manifest; and the pair would have been married, but for the circumstance that her father (partly through Wardlaw's influence, by-the-by) had obtained a lucrative post abroad, which it suited his means to accept, at all events for a time. He was a widower, and his daughter could not let him go alone.

This temporary separation, if it postponed a marriage, led naturally to a solemn engagement; and Arthur

Wardlaw enjoyed the happiness of writing and receiving affectionate letters by every foreign post. Love, worthily bestowed, shed its balm upon his heart, and under its soft but powerful charm he grew tranquil and complacent, and his character and temper seemed to improve. Such virtue is there in a pure attachment.

Meanwhile the extent of his operations alarmed old Penfold; but he soon reasoned that worthy down with overpowering conclusions and superior smiles.

He had been three years the ruling spirit of Wardlaw and Son, when some curious events took place in another hemisphere; and in these events, which we are now to relate, Arthur Wardlaw was more nearly interested than may appear at first sight.

Robert Penfold, in due course, applied to Lieutenant-General Rolleston for a ticket of leave. That functionary thought the application premature, the crime being so grave. He complained that the system had become too lax, and for his part he seldom gave a ticket of leave until some suitable occupation was provided for the applicant. "Will anybody take you as a clerk? If so — I'll see about it."

Robert Penfold could find nobody to take him into a post of confidence all at once, and wrote the General an eloquent letter, begging hard to be allowed to labor with his hands.

Fortunately, General Rolleston's gardener had just turned him off: so he offered the post to his eloquent correspondent, remarking that he did not much mind employing a ticket-of-leave man himself, though he was resolved to protect his neighbors from their relapses.

The convict then came to General Rolleston, and begged leave to enter on his duties under the name of James Seaton. At that General Rolleston hem'd and

ONE DAY, AS HE WAS ROLLING THE GRASS UPON THE LAWN.

haw'd, and took a note. But his final decision was as follows: "If you really mean to change your character, why, the name you have disgraced might hang round your neck. Well, I'll give you every chance. But," said this old warrior, suddenly compressing his resolute lips just a little, "if you go a yard off the straight path *now*, look for no mercy — Jemmy Seaton."

So the convict was re-christened at the tail of a threat, and let loose among the warrior's tulips.

His appearance was changed as effectually as his name. Even before he was Seatoned he had grown a silky mustache and beard of singular length and beauty; and what with these, and his workingman's clothes, and his cheeks and neck tanned by the sun, our readers would never have recognized in this hale, bearded laborer, the pale prisoner that had trembled, raged, wept, and submitted in the dock of the Central Criminal Court.

Our universities cure men of doing things by halves, be the things mental or muscular; so Seaton gardened much more zealously than his plebeian predecessor: up at five, and did not leave till eight.

But he was unpopular in the kitchen — because he was always out of it: taciturn and bitter, he shunned his fellow-servants.

Yet working among the flowers did him good; these his pretty companions and nurslings had no vices.

One day, as he was rolling the grass upon the lawn, he heard a soft rustle at some distance, and, looking round, saw a young lady on the gravel path, whose calm but bright face, coming so suddenly, literally dazzled him. She had a clear cheek blooming with exercise, rich brown hair, smooth, glossy, and abundant, and a very light hazel eye, of singular beauty and serenity. She glided along, tranquil as a goddess, smote him with beauty and perfume, and left him staring after her reced-

ing figure, which was, in its way, as captivating as her face.

She was walking up and down for exercise, briskly, but without effort. Once she passed within a few yards of him, but her eyes did not rest an instant on her gardener; and so she passed and repassed, unconsciously sawing this solitary heart with soft but penetrating thrills.

At last she went indoors to luncheon, and the lawn seemed to miss the light music of her rustling dress, and the sunshine of her presence, and there was a painful void; but that passed, and a certain sense of happiness stole over James Seaton, — an unreasonable joy, that often runs before folly and trouble.

The young lady was Helen Rolleston, just returned home from a visit. She walked in the garden every day, and Seaton watched her, and peeped at her, unseen, behind trees and bushes. He fed his eyes and his heart upon her, and by degrees she became the sun of his solitary existence. It was madness; but its first effect was not unwholesome. The daily study of this creature, who, though by no means the angel he took her for, was at all events a pure and virtuous woman, soothed his sore heart, and counteracted the demoralizing influences of his late companions. Every day he drank deeper of an insane, but purifying and elevating passion.

He avoided the kitchen still more; and that, by-the-by, was unlucky; for there he could have learned something about Miss Helen Rolleston, that would have warned him to keep at the other end of the garden, whenever that charming face and form glided to and fro amongst the minor flowers.

A beautiful face fires our imagination, and we see higher virtue and intelligence in it, than we can detect in its owner's head or heart when we descend to calm

inspection. James Seaton gazed on Miss Rolleston day after day, at so respectful a distance, that she became his goddess. If a day passed without his seeing her, he was dejected. When she was behind her time, he was restless, anxious, and his work distasteful; and then, when she came out at last, he thrilled all over, and the lawn, ay, the world itself, seemed to fill with sunshine. His adoration, timid by its own nature, was doubly so by reason of his fallen and hopeless condition. He cut nosegays for her; but gave them to her maid Wilson for her. He had not the courage to offer them to herself.

One evening, as he went home, a man addressed him familiarly, but in a low voice. Seaton looked at him attentively, and recognized him at last. It was a convict called Butt, who had come over in the ship with him. The man offered him a glass of ale; Seaton declined it. Butt, a very clever rogue, seemed hurt: so then Seaton assented reluctantly. Butt took him to a public-house in a narrow street, and into a private room. Seaton started as soon as he entered, for there sat two repulsive ruffians, and, by a look that passed rapidly between them and Butt, he saw plainly they were waiting for him. He felt nervous; the place was so uncouth and dark, the faces so villanous.

However, they invited him to sit down, roughly, but with an air of good fellowship; and very soon opened their business over their ale. We are all bound to assist our fellow-creatures, when it can be done without trouble; and what they asked of him was a simple act of courtesy, such as in their opinion no man worthy of the name could deny to his fellow. It was to give General Rolleston's watch-dog a piece of prepared meat upon a certain evening: and in return for this trifling civility, they were generous enough to offer him a full share of

any light valuables they might find in the General's house.

Seaton felt the danger of refusing, and put his face in his hands a moment. "I cannot do it," said he.

"Why not?"

"He has been too good to me."

A coarse laugh of derision greeted this argument; it seemed so irrelevant to these pure egotists. Seaton, however, persisted, and on that one of the men got up and stood before the door, and drew his knife gently.

Seaton glanced his eyes round in search of a weapon, and turned pale.

"Do you mean to split on us, mate?" said one of the ruffians in front of him.

"No, I don't. But I won't rob my benefactor; you shall kill me first." And with that he darted to the fire-place, and in a moment the poker was high in air, and the way he squared his shoulders and stood ready to hit to the on, or cut to the off, was a caution.

"Come, drop that," said Butt, grimly; "and put up *your* knife, Bob. Can't a pal be out of a job, and yet not split on them that is in it?"

"Why should I split?" said Robert Penfold. "Has the law been a friend to me? But I won't rob my benefactor — and his daughter."

"That is square enough," said Butt. "Why, pals, there are other cribs to be cracked beside that old bloke's. Finish the ale, mate, and part friends."

"If you will promise me to 'crack some other crib,' and let that alone."

A sullen assent was given, and Seaton drank their healths, and walked away. Butt followed him soon after, and affected to side with him, and intimated that he himself was capable of not robbing a man's house who had been good to him, or to a pal of his. Indeed,

this plausible person said so much, and his sullen comrades had said so little, that Seaton, rendered keen and anxious by love, invested his savings in a Colt's revolver and ammunition.

He did not stop there; after the hint about the watch-dog, he would not trust that faithful but too carnivorous animal; he brought his blankets into the little tool-house, and lay there every night in a sort of dog's sleep. This tool-house was erected in a little back garden, separated from the lawn only by some young trees in single file. Now Miss Rolleston's window looked out upon the lawn, so that Seaton's watch-tower was not many yards from it; then, as the tool-house was only lighted from above, he bored a hole in the wooden structure, and through this he watched, and slept, and watched. He used to sit studying theology by a farthing rushlight till the lady's bed-time, and then he watched for her shadow. If it appeared for a few moments on the blind, he gave a sigh of content, and went to sleep, but awaked every now and then to see that all was well.

After a few nights, his alarms naturally ceased; but his love increased, fed now from this new source, the sweet sense of being the secret protector of her he adored.

Meantime, Miss Rolleston's lady's-maid, Wilson, fell in love with him after her fashion; she had taken a fancy to his face at once, and he had encouraged her a little, unintentionally; for he brought the nosegays to her, and listened complacently to her gossip, for the sake of the few words she let fall now and then about her young mistress. As he never exchanged two sentences at a time with any other servant, this flattered Sarah Wilson, and she soon began to meet and accost him oftener, and in cherrier-colored ribbons, than he could stand. So then he showed impatience, and then

she, reading him by herself, suspected some vulgar rival. Suspicion soon bred jealousy, jealousy vigilance, and vigilance detection.

Her first discovery was, that, so long as she talked of Miss Helen Rolleston, she was always welcome; her second was, that Seaton slept in the tool-house.

She was not romantic enough to connect her two discoveries together. They lay apart in her mind, until circumstances we are about to relate supplied a connecting link.

One Thursday evening James Seaton's goddess sat alone with her papa, and — being a young lady of fair abilities, who had gone through her course of music and other studies, taught brainlessly, and who was now going through a course of monotonous pleasures, and had not accumulated any great store of mental resources — she was listless and languid, and would have yawned forty times in her papa's face, only she was too well-bred. She always turned her head away when it came, and either suppressed it, or else hid it with a lovely white hand. At last, as she was a good girl, she blushed at her behavior, and roused herself up, and said she, "Papa, shall I play you the new quadrilles?"

Papa gave a start and a shake, and said, with well-feigned vehemence, "Ay, do, my dear," and so composed himself — to listen; and Helen sat down and played the quadrilles.

The composer had taken immortal melodies, some gay, some sad, and had robbed them of their distinctive character, and hashed them, till they were all one monotonous rattle. But General Rolleston was little the worse for all this. As Apollo saved Horace from hearing a poetaster's rhymes, so did Somnus, another beneficent little deity, rescue our warrior from his daughter's music.

She was neither angry nor surprised. A delicious smile illumined her face directly; she crept to him on tip-toe, and bestowed a kiss, light as a zephyr, on his gray head. And, in truth, the bending attitude of this supple figure, clad in snowy muslin, the virginal face and light hazel eye beaming love and reverence, and the airy kiss, had something angelic.

She took her candle, and glided up to her bedroom. And, the moment she got there, and could gratify her somnolence without offence, need we say she became wide-awake? She sat down and wrote long letters to three other young ladies, gushing affection, asking questions of the kind nobody replies to, painting, with a young lady's colors, the male being to whom she was shortly to be married, wishing her dear friends a like demi-god, if perchance earth contained two; and so to the last new bonnet, and preacher.

She sat over her paper till one o'clock, and Seaton watched and adored her shadow.

When she had done writing, she opened her window and looked out upon the night. She lifted those wonderful hazel eyes towards the stars, and her watcher might well be pardoned if he saw in her a celestial being looking up from an earthly resting-place towards her native sky.

At two o'clock she was in bed, but not asleep. She lay calmly gazing at the Southern Cross, and other lovely stars shining with vivid, but chaste, fire in the purple vault of heaven.

While thus employed she heard a slight sound outside that made her turn her eyes towards a young tree near her window. Its top branches were waving a good deal, though there was not a breath stirring. This struck her as curious, very curious.

Whilst she wondered, suddenly an arm and a hand

came in sight, and after them the whole figure of a man, going up the tree.

Helen sat up now, glaring with terror, and was so paralyzed she did not utter a sound. About a foot below her window was a lead flat that roofed the bay window below. It covered an area of several feet, and the man sprung on to it with perfect ease from the tree. Helen shrieked with terror. At that very instant there was a flash, a pistol shot, and the man's arms went whirling, and he staggered and fell over the edge of the flat, and struck the grass below with a heavy thud. Shots and blows followed, and all the sounds of fierce fighting rung in Helen's ears as she flung herself screaming from the bed and darted to the door. She ran and clung quivering to her sleepy maid Wilson. The house was alarmed, lights flashed, footsteps pattered, there was universal commotion.

General Rolleston soon learned his daughter's story from Wilson, and aroused his male servants, one of whom was an old soldier. They searched the house first; but no entrance had been effected; so they went out on the lawn with blunderbuss and pistol.

They found a man lying on his back at the foot of the bay window.

They pounced on him, and, to their amazement, it was the gardener, James Seaton. Insensible.

General Rolleston was quite taken aback for a moment. Then he was sorry. But after a little reflection, he said very sternly, "Carry the blackguard in-doors; and run for an officer."

Seaton was taken into the hall, and laid flat on the floor.

All the servants gathered about him, brimful of curiosity, and the female ones began to speak all together; but General Rolleston told them sharply to hold their

tongues, and to retire behind the man. "Somebody sprinkle him with cold water," said he; "and be quiet, all of you, and keep out of his sight, while I examine him." He stood before the insensible figure with his arms folded, amidst a dead silence, broken only by the stifled sobs of Sarah Wilson, and of a sociable housemaid who cried with her for company.

And now Seaton began to writhe and show signs of returning sense.

Next he moaned piteously, and sighed. But General Rolleston could not pity him; he waited grimly for returning consciousness, to subject him to a merciless interrogatory.

He waited just one second too long. He had to answer a question instead of putting one.

The judgment is the last faculty a man recovers when emerging from insensibility; and Seaton, seeing the General standing before him, stretched out his hands, and said, in a faint but earnest voice, before eleven witnesses, "Is she safe? Oh, is she safe?"

CHAPTER IV.

Sarah Wilson left off crying, and looked down on the ground with a very red face. General Rolleston was amazed. "Is she safe! Is who safe?" said he. "He means my mistress," replied Wilson, rather brusquely; and flounced out of the hall.

"She is safe, no thanks to you," said General Rolleston. "What were you doing under her window at this time of night?" And the harsh tone in which this question was put showed Seaton he was suspected. This wounded him, and he replied doggedly, "Lucky for you all I was there."

"That is no answer to my question," said the General, sternly.

"It is all the answer I shall give you."

"Then I shall hand you over to the officer, without another word."

"Do, sir, do," said Seaton, bitterly; but he added more gently, "You will be sorry for it when you come to your senses."

At this moment Wilson entered with a message. "If you please, sir, Miss Rolleston says the robber had no beard. Miss have never noticed Seaton's face, but his beard she have; and oh! if you please, sir, she begged me to ask him — Was it you that fired the pistol and shot the robber?"

The delivery of this ungrammatical message, but rational query, was like a ray of light streaming into a dark place: it changed the whole aspect of things. As for Seaton, he received it as if Heaven was speaking to

him through Wilson. His sullen air relaxed, the water stood in his eyes, he smiled affectionately, and said in a low tender voice, "Tell her I heard some bad characters talking about this house — that was a month ago — so, ever since then, I have slept in the tool-house to watch. Yes, I shot the robber with my revolver, and I marked one or two more; but they were three to one; I think I must have got a blow on the head; for I felt nothing — "

Here he was interrupted by a violent scream from Wilson. She pointed downwards, with her eyes glaring; and a little blood was seen to be trickling slowly over Seaton's stocking and shoe.

"Wounded," said the General's servant, Tom, in the business-like accent of one who had seen a thousand wounds.

"Oh! never mind that," said Seaton. "It can't be very deep, for I don't feel it;" then fixing his eyes on General Rolleston, he said, in a voice that broke down suddenly, "There stands the only man who has wounded me to-night, to hurt me."

The way General Rolleston received this point-blank reproach surprised some persons present, who had observed only the imperious and iron side of his character. He hung his head in silence a moment; then, being discontented with himself, he went into a passion with his servants for standing idle. "Run away, you women," said he, roughly. "Now, Tom, if you are good for anything, strip the man and stanch his wound. Andrew, a bottle of port, quick!"

Then, leaving him for a while in friendly hands, he went to his daughter, and asked her if she saw any objection to a bed being made up in the house for the wounded convict.

"Oh, papa," said she, "why, of course not. I am all

gratitude. What is he like, Wilson? for it is a most provoking thing, I never noticed his face, only his beautiful beard glittering in the sunshine ever so far off. Poor young man! Oh yes, papa! send him to bed directly, and we will all nurse him. I never did any good in the world yet, and so why not begin at once?"

General Rolleston laughed at this squirt of enthusiasm from his staid daughter, and went off to give the requisite orders.

But Wilson followed him immediately and stopped him in the passage. "If you please, sir, I think you had better not. I have something to tell you." She then communicated to him by degrees her suspicion that James Seaton was in love with his daughter. He treated this with due ridicule at first; but she gave him one reason after another till she staggered him, and he went downstairs in a most mixed and puzzled frame of mind, inclined to laugh, inclined to be angry, inclined to be sorry.

The officer had just arrived, and was looking over some photographs to see if James Seaton was "one of his birds." Such, alas! was his expression.

At sight of this, Rolleston colored up; but extricated himself from the double difficulty with some skill. "Hexham," said he, "this poor fellow has behaved like a man, and got himself wounded in my service. You are to take him to the infirmary; but mind, they must treat him like my own son, and nothing he asks for denied him."

Seaton walked with feeble steps, and leaning on two men, to the infirmary; and General Rolleston ordered a cup of coffee, lighted a cigar, and sat cogitating over this strange business, and asking himself how he could get rid of this young madman, and yet befriend him. As for Sarah Wilson, she went to bed discontented, and

wondering at her own bad judgment. She saw, too late, that, if she had held her tongue, Seaton would have been her patient and her prisoner; and as for Miss Rolleston, when it came to the point, why, she would never have nursed him except by proxy, and the proxy would have been Sarah Wilson.

However, the blunder, blind passion had led her into was partially repaired by Miss Rolleston herself. When she heard next day where Seaton was gone, she lifted up her hands in amazement. "What *could* papa be thinking of to send our benefactor to a hospital?" And, after meditating awhile, she directed Wilson to cut a nosegay and carry it to Seaton. "He is a gardener," said she innocently. "Of course he will miss his flowers sadly in that miserable place."

And she gave the same order every day with a constancy that, you must know, formed part of this young lady's character. Soup, wine, and jellies were sent from the kitchen every other day with equal pertinacity.

Wilson concealed the true donor of all those things, and took the credit to herself. By this means she obtained the patient's gratitude, and he showed it so frankly, she hoped to steal his love as well.

But no! his fancy and his heart remained true to the cold beauty he had served so well, and she had forgotten him, apparently.

This irritated Wilson at last, and she set to work to cure him with wholesome but bitter medicine. She sat down beside him one day, and said cheerfully, "We are all '*on the key-feet*' just now. Miss Rolleston's beau is come on a visit."

The patient opened his eyes with astonishment.

"Miss Rolleston's beau?"

"Ay, her intended. What, didn't you know she is engaged to be married?"

"She engaged to be married?" gasped Seaton.

Wilson watched him with a remorseless eye.

"Why, James," said she after awhile, "did you think the likes of her would go through the world without a mate?"

Seaton made no reply but a moan, and lay back like one dead, utterly crushed by this cruel blow.

A buxom middle-aged nurse now came up, and said, with a touch of severity, "Come, my good girl, no doubt you mean well, but you are doing ill. You had better leave him to us for the present."

On this hint Wilson bounced out, and left the patient to his misery.

At her next visit she laid a nosegay on his bed, and gossiped away, talking of every thing in the world except Miss Rolleston.

At last she came to a pause, and Seaton laid his hand on her arm directly, and looking piteously in her face, spoke his first word.

"Does she love him?"

"What, still harping on *her?*" said Wilson; "well, she doesn't hate him, I suppose, or she would not marry him."

"For pity's sake don't trifle with me! Does she love him?"

"La, James, how can I tell? She mayn't love him quite as much as I could love a man, that took my fancy" (here she cast a languishing glance on Seaton); "but I see no difference between her and other young ladies. Miss is very fond of her papa, for one thing; and he favors the match. Ay, and she likes her partner well enough: she is brighter like now he is in the house, and she reads all her friends' letters to him ever so lovingly; and I do notice she leans on him out walking, a trifle more than there is any need for."

At this picture James Seaton writhed in his bed like some agonized creature under vivisection; but the woman, spurred by jealousy, and also by egotistical passion, had no mercy left for him.

"And why not?" continued she; "he is young, and handsome, and rich, and he dotes on her. If you are really her friend, you ought to be glad she is so well suited."

At this admonition the tears stood in Seaton's eyes, and, after a while, he got strength to say, "I know I ought, I know it. If he is only worthy of her: as worthy as any man could be."

"That he is, James. Why, I'll be bound you have heard of him. It is young Mr. Wardlaw."

Seaton started up in bed. "Who? Wardlaw? what Wardlaw?"

"What Wardlaw? why the great London merchant, his son. Leastways he manages the whole concern now, I hear; the old gentleman, he is retired by all accounts."

"Arthur Wardlaw! He is a villain!" yelled James Seaton, with his eyes glaring fearfully, and both hands beating the air.

Sarah Wilson recoiled with alarm.

"That angel marry *him!*" shrieked Seaton. "Never, while I live: I'll throttle him with these hands first."

What more his ungovernable fury would have uttered was interrupted by a rush of nurses and attendants, and Wilson was bundled out of the place with little ceremony.

He contrived however to hurl a word after her, accompanied with a look of concentrated rage and resolution that haunted her for years.

"Never, I tell you — while I live."

At her next visit to the hospital, Wilson was refused admission, by order of the head surgeon. She left her flowers daily all the same.

After a few days, she thought the matter might have cooled, and, having a piece of news to communicate to Seaton, with respect to Arthur Wardlaw, she asked to see that patient.

"Left the hospital this morning," was the reply.

"What, cured?"

"Why not? We have cured worse cases than his."

"Where has he gone to? Pray tell me."

"Oh, certainly." And inquiry was made. But the reply was, "Left no address."

Sarah Wilson, like many other women of high and low degree, had swift misgivings of mischief to come. She was taken with a fit of trembling, and had to sit down in the hall.

And, to tell the truth, she had cause to tremble; for that tongue of hers had launched two wild beasts — Jealousy and Revenge.

When she got better she went home, and, cowardlike, said not a word to living soul.

That day, Arthur Wardlaw dined with General Rolleston and Helen. They were to be alone for a certain reason; and he came half an hour before dinner. Helen thought he would, and was ready for him on the lawn.

They walked arm-in-arm, talking of the happiness before them, and regretting a temporary separation that was to intervene. He was her father's choice, and she loved her father devotedly; he was her male property; and young ladies like that sort of property, especially when they see nothing to dislike in it. He loved her passionately, and that was her due, and pleased her, and drew a gentle affection, if not a passion, from her in return. Yes, that lovely forehead did come very near young Wardlaw's shoulder, more than once or twice as they strolled slowly up and down on the soft mossy turf.

And, on the other side of the hedge that bounded the

lawn, a man lay crouched in the ditch, and saw it all with gleaming eyes.

Just before the affianced ones went in, Helen said, "I have a little favor to ask you, dear. The poor man, Seaton, who fought the robbers, and was wounded — papa says he is a man of education, and wanted to be a clerk or something. *Could* you find him a place?"

"I think I can," said Wardlaw; "indeed, I am sure. A line to White and Co. will do it; they want a shipping clerk."

"Oh, how good you are!" said Helen; and lifted her face all beaming with thanks.

The opportunity was tempting; the lover fond: two faces met for a single moment, and one of the two burned for five minutes after.

The basilisk eyes saw the soft collision; but the owner of those eyes did not hear the words that earned him that torture. He lay still and bided his time.

General Rolleston's house stood clear of the town, at the end of a short but narrow and tortuous lane. This situation had tempted the burglars whom Seaton baffled; and now it tempted Seaton.

Wardlaw must pass that way on leaving General Rolleston's house.

At a bend of the lane two twin elms stood out a foot or two from the hedge. Seaton got behind these at about ten o'clock, and watched for him with a patience and immobility that boded ill.

His preparations for this encounter were singular. He had a close-shutting inkstand and a pen, and one sheet of paper, at the top of which he had written "Sydney," and the day of the month and year, leaving the rest blank. And he had the revolver with which he had shot the robber at Helen Rolleston's window.

CHAPTER V.

THE moon went down; the stars shone out clearer.

Eleven o'clock boomed from a church clock in the town.

Wardlaw did not come, and Seaton did not move from his ambush.

Twelve o'clock boomed, and Wardlaw never came, and Seaton never moved.

Soon after midnight, General Rolleston's hall-door opened, and a figure appeared in a flood of light. Seaton's eyes gleamed at the sight, for it was young Wardlaw, with a footman at his back holding a lighted lamp.

Wardlaw, however, seemed in no hurry to leave the house, and the reason soon appeared; he was joined by Helen Rolleston, and she was equipped for walking. The watcher saw her serene face shine in the light. The general came next; and, as they left the door, out came Tom with a blunderbuss, and brought up the rear. Seaton drew behind the trees, and postponed, but did not resign, his purpose.

Steps and murmurings came, and passed him, and receded.

The only words he caught distinctly came from Wardlaw, as he passed. "It is nearly high tide. I fear we must make haste."

Seaton followed the whole party at a short distance, feeling sure they would eventually separate, and give him his opportunity with Wardlaw.

They went down to the harbor and took a boat; Seaton

came nearer, and learned they were going on board the great steamer bound for England that loomed so black, with monstrous eyes of fire.

They put off, and Seaton stood baffled.

Presently the black monster, with enormous eyes of fire, spouted her steam like a leviathan, and then was still; next the smoke puffed, the heavy paddles revolved, and she rushed out of the harbor; and Seaton sat down upon the ground, and all seemed ended. Helen gone to England! Wardlaw gone with her! Love and revenge had alike eluded him. He looked up at the sky, and played with the pebbles at his feet, stupidly, stupidly. He wondered why he was ever born; why he consented to live a single minute after this. His angel and his demon gone home together, and he left here!

He wrote a few lines on the paper he had intended for Wardlaw, sprinkled them with sand, and put them in his bosom, then stretched himself out with a weary moan, like a dying dog, to wait the flow of the tide and, with it, Death. Whether or not his resolution or his madness would have carried him so far cannot be known, for even as the water rippled in and, trickling under his back, chilled him to the bone, a silvery sound struck his ear. He started to his feet, and life and its joys rushed back upon him. It was the voice of the woman he loved so madly.

Helen Rolleston was on the water, coming ashore again in the little boat.

He crawled, like a lizard, among the boats ashore to catch a sight of her: he did see her, and was near her, unseen himself. She landed with her father. So Wardlaw was gone to England without her. Seaton trembled with joy. Presently his goddess began to lament in the prettiest way. "Papa! papa!" she sighed, "why must friends part, in this sad world? Poor

Arthur is gone from me: and by and by I shall go from you, my own papa." At that prospect she wept gently.

"Why, you foolish child!" said the old general, tenderly, "what matters a little parting, when we are all to meet again in dear old England? Well then, there, have a cry; it will do you good." He patted her head tenderly, as she clung to his warlike breast; and she took him at his word; the tears ran swiftly and glistened in the very starlight.

Seaton's heart yearned at all this.

What! mustn't *he* say a word to comfort her; he, who at that moment, would have thought no more of dying to serve her, or to please her, than he would of throwing one of those pebbles into that slimy water?

Well, her pure tears somehow cooled his hot brain, and washed his soul, and left him wondering at himself and his misdeeds this night. His guardian angel seemed to go by and wave her dewy wings, and fan his hot passions as she passed.

He kneeled down and thanked God he had not met Arthur Wardlaw in that dark lane.

Then he went home to his humble lodgings, and there buried himself; and from that day seldom went out, except to seek employment. He soon obtained it as a copyist.

Meantime the police were on his track, employed by a person with a gentle disposition, but a tenacity of purpose truly remarkable.

Great was Seaton's uneasiness when one day he saw Hexham at the foot of his stair; greater still, when the officer's quick eye caught sight of him, and his light foot ascended the stairs directly. He felt sure Hexham had heard of his lurking about General Rolleston's premises. However, he prepared to defend himself to the uttermost.

Hexham came into his room without ceremony, and looking mighty grim. "Well, my lad, so we have got you after all."

"What is my crime, now?" asked Seaton, sullenly.

"James," said the officer, very solemnly, "it is an unheard-of crime this time. You have been running away from a pretty girl. Now that is a mistake at all times; but when she is as beautiful as a angel, and rich enough to slip a fiver into Dick Hexham's hands, and lay him on your track, what *is* the use? Letter for *you*, my man."

Seaton took the letter with a puzzled air. It was written in a clear but feminine hand, and slightly scented.

The writer, in a few polished lines, excused herself for taking extraordinary means to find Mr. Seaton; but hoped he would consider that he had laid her under a deep obligation, and that gratitude *will* sometimes be importunate. She had the pleasure to inform him that the office of shipping clerk, at Messrs. White and Co.'s, was at his service, and she hoped he would take it without an hour's further delay, for she was assured that many persons had risen to wealth and consideration in the colony from such situations.

Then, as this wary but courteous young lady had no wish to enter into a correspondence with her ex-gardener, she added, —

"Mr. Seaton need not trouble himself to reply to this note. A simple 'yes' to Mr. Hexham will be enough, and will give sincere pleasure to Mr. Seaton's

"Obedient servant and well-wisher,

"Helen Anne Rolleston."

Seaton bowed his head over this letter in silent but deep emotion.

Hexham respected that emotion and watched him with a sort of vague sympathy.

Seaton lifted his head, and the tears stood thick in his eyes. Said he, in a voice of exquisite softness, scarce above a whisper, "Tell her 'yes,' and 'God bless her.' Good-by. I want to go on my knees, and pray God to bless her as she deserves."

Hexham took the hint, and retired softly.

CHAPTER VI.

White and Co. stumbled on a treasure in James Seaton. Your colonial clerk is not so narrow and apathetic as your London clerk, whose two objects seem to be, to learn one department only, and not to do too much in that; but Seaton, a gentleman and a scholar, eclipsed even colonial clerks in this, that he omitted no opportunity of learning the whole business of White and Co., and was also animated by a feverish zeal, that now and then provoked laughter from clerks, but was agreeable, as well as surprising, to White and Co. Of that zeal, his incurable passion was partly the cause. Fortunes had been made with great rapidity in Sydney; and Seaton now conceived a wild hope of acquiring one, by some lucky hit, before Wardlaw could return to Helen Rolleston. And yet his common sense said, If I was as rich as Crœsus, how could she ever mate with me, a stained man? And yet his burning heart said, Don't listen to reason; listen only to me. Try.

And so he worked double tides; and, in virtue of his university education, had no snobbish notions about never putting his hand to manual labor; he would lay down his pen at any moment, and bear a hand to lift a chest, or roll a cask. Old White saw him thus multiply himself, and was so pleased that he raised his salary one-third.

He never saw Helen Rolleston, except on Sunday. On that day he went to her church, and sat half behind a pillar, and feasted his eyes and his heart upon her. He lived sparingly, saved money, bought a strip of land,

by payment of ten pounds deposit, and sold it in forty hours for one hundred pounds profit, and watched keenly for similar opportunities on a larger scale; and all for her. Struggling with a mountain: hoping against reason, and the world.

White and Co. were employed to ship a valuable cargo on board two vessels chartered by Wardlaw and Son, the Shannon, and the Proserpine.

Both these ships lay in Sydney harbor, and had taken in the bulk of their cargoes; but the supplement was the cream. For Wardlaw, in person, had warehoused eighteen cases of gold dust and ingots, and forty of lead and smelted copper. They were all examined and branded by Mr. White, who had duplicate keys of the gold cases. But the contents, as a matter of habit and prudence, were not described outside; but were marked Proserpine and Shannon, respectively; the mate of the Proserpine, who was in Wardlaw's confidence, had written instructions to look carefully to the stowage of all these cases, and was in and out of the store one afternoon just before closing, and measured the cubic contents of the cases, with a view to stowage in the respective vessels. The last time he came he seemed rather the worse for liquor; and Seaton, who accompanied him, having stepped out a minute for something or other, was rather surprised on his return to find the door closed, and it struck him Mr. Wylie (that was the mate's name) might be inside; the more so as the door closed very easily with a spring bolt, but could only be opened by a key of peculiar construction. Seaton took out his key, opened the door, and called to the mate, but received no reply. However, he took the precaution to go round the store, and see whether Wylie, rendered somnolent by liquor, might not be lying oblivious among the cases: Wylie, however, was

not to be seen, and Seaton, finding himself alone, did an unwise thing; he came and contemplated Wardlaw's cases of metal and specie. (Men will go too near the thing that causes their pain.) He eyed them with grief and with desire, and could not restrain a sigh at these material proofs of his rival's wealth: the wealth that probably had smoothed his way to General Rolleston's home, and to his daughter's heart; for wealth can pave the way to hearts, ay even to hearts that cannot be downright bought. This reverie no doubt lasted longer than he thought, for presently he heard the loud rattle of shutters going up below; it was closing time; he hastily closed and locked the iron shutters, and then went out and shut the door.

He had been gone about two hours, and that part of the street, so noisy in business hours, was hushed in silence, all but an occasional footstep on the flags outside, when something mysterious occurred in the warehouse, now as dark as pitch.

At an angle of the wall stood two large cases in a vertical position, with smaller cases lying at their feet; these two cases were about eight feet high, more or less. Well, behind these cases suddenly flashed a feeble light, and the next moment two brown and sinewy hands appeared on the edge of one of the cases — the edge next the wall; the case vibrated and rocked a little, and the next moment there mounted on the top of it, not a cat, nor a monkey, as might have been expected, but an animal that in truth resembles both those quadrupeds, viz., a sailor; and need we say that sailor was the mate of the Proserpine? He descended lightly from the top of the case, behind which he had been jammed for hours, and lighted a dark lantern; and went softly groping about the store with it. This was a mysterious act, and would perhaps have puzzled the proprietors of the store even

more than it would a stranger: for a stranger would have said at once this is burglary, or else arson; but those acquainted with the place would have known that neither of those crimes was very practicable. The enterprising sailor could not burn down this particular store without roasting himself the first thing; and indeed he could not burn it down at all: for the roof was flat, and was in fact one gigantic iron tank, like the roof of Mr. Goding's brewery in London: and by a neat contrivance of American origin, the whole tank could be turned in one moment to a shower bath, and drown a conflagration in thirty seconds or thereabouts; nor could he rifle the place; the goods were greatly protected by their weight, and it was impossible to get out of the store without raising an alarm and being searched.

But, not to fall into the error of writers who underrate their readers' curiosity and intelligence, and so deluge them with comments and explanations, we will now simply relate what Wylie did, leaving you to glean his motives as this tale advances.

His jacket had large pockets, and he took out of them a bunch of eighteen bright steel keys numbered, a set of new screw-drivers, a flask of rum, and two ship biscuits.

He unlocked the eighteen cases marked Proserpine, etc., and, peering in with his lantern, saw the gold dust and small ingots packed in parcels and surrounded by Australian wool of the highest possible quality. It was a luscious sight. He then proceeded to a heavier task; he unscrewed, one after another, eighteen of the cases marked Shannon, and the eighteen so selected, perhaps by private marks, proved to be packed close, and on a different system from the gold, viz., in pigs or square blocks, three, or in some cases four, to each chest. Now, these two ways of packing the specie and the baser metal respectively, had the effect of producing a certain uni-

formity of weight in the thirty-six cases Wylie was inspecting; otherwise the gold cases would have been twice the weight of those that contained the baser metal: for lead is proverbially heavy, but under scientific tests is to gold as five to twelve, or thereabouts.

In his secret and mysterious labor Wylie was often interrupted. Whenever he heard a step on the pavement outside, he drew the slide of his lantern and hid the light. If he had examined the iron shutters, he would have seen that his light could never pierce through them into the street. But he was not aware of this. Notwithstanding these occasional interruptions, he worked so hard and continuously, that the perspiration poured down him ere he had unscrewed those eighteen chests containing the pigs of lead. However, it was done at last, and then he refreshed himself with a draught from his flask. The next thing was, he took the three pigs of lead out of one of the cases marked Shannon, etc., and numbered fifteen, and laid them very gently on the floor. Then he transferred to that empty case the mixed contents of a case branded Proserpine 1, etc., and this he did with the utmost care and nicety, lest gold dust spilled should tell tales. And so he went on and shifted the contents of the whole eighteen cases marked Proserpine, etc., into eighteen cases marked Shannon, etc., and refilled them with the Shannon's lead. Frolicsome Mr. Wylie! Then he sat down on one of the cases Proserpine, and ate a biscuit and drank a little rum: not much: for at this part of his career he was a very sober man, though he could feign drunkenness, or anything else.

The gold was all at his mercy, yet he did not pocket an ounce of it; not even a penny-weight to make a wedding-ring for Nancy Rouse. Mr. Wylie had a conscience, and a very original one it was; and, above all, he was

very true to those he worked with. He carefully locked the gold cases up again, and resumed the screw-driver, for there was another heavy stroke of work to be done; and he went at it like a man. He carefully screwed down again, one after another, all those eighteen cases marked Shannon, which he had filled with gold-dust, and then, heating a sailor's needle red hot over his burning wick, he put his own secret marks on those eighteen cases — marks that no eye but his own could detect. By this time, though a very powerful man, he felt much exhausted, and would gladly have snatched an hour's repose. But consulting his watch by the light of his lantern, he found the sun had just risen. He retired to his place of concealment in the same cat-like way he had come out of it — that is to say, he mounted on the high cases, and then slipped down behind them, into the angle of the wall.

As soon as the office opened, two sailors, whom he had carefully instructed over night, came with a boat for the cases; the warehouse was opened in consequence, but they were informed that Wylie must be present at the delivery.

"Oh, he won't be long," said they; "told us he would meet us here."

There was a considerable delay, and a good deal of talking, and presently Wylie was at their backs, and put in his word.

Seaton was greatly surprised at finding him there, and asked him where he had sprung from.

"Me!" said Wylie, jocosely, "why, I hailed from Davy Jones's locker last."

"I never heard you come in," said Seaton, thoughtfully.

"Well, sir," replied Wylie, civilly, "a man does learn to go like a cat on board ship, that is the truth. I came

in at the door like my betters; but I thought I heard you mention my name, so I made no noise. Well, here I am, any way, and— Jack, how many trips can we take these thundering chests in? Let us see, eighteen for the Proserpine, and forty for the Shannon. Is that correct, sir?"

"Perfectly."

"Then, if you will deliver them, I'll check the delivery aboard the lighter there; and then we'll tow her alongside the ships."

Seaton called up two more clerks, and sent one to the boat, and one on board the barge. The barge was within hail; so the cases were checked as they passed out of the store, and checked again at the small boat, and also on board the lighter. When they were all cleared out, Wylie gave Seaton his receipt for them, and, having a steam-tug in attendance, towed the lighter alongside the Shannon first.

Seaton carried the receipt to his employer.

"But, sir," said he, "is this regular for an officer of the Proserpine to take the Shannon's cargo from us?"

"No, it is not regular," said the old gentleman; and he looked through a window, and summoned Mr. Hardcastle.

Hardcastle explained that the Proserpine shipped the gold, which was the more valuable consignment; and that he saw no harm in the officer, who was so highly trusted by the merchant (on this and on former occasions), taking out a few tons of lead and copper to the Shannon.

"Well, sir," said Seaton, "suppose I was to go out and see the chests stowed in those vessels?"

"I think you are making a fuss about nothing," said Hardcastle.

Mr. White was of the same opinion, but, being too

wise to check zeal and caution, told Seaton he might go for his own satisfaction.

Seaton, with some difficulty, got a little boat and pulled across the harbor. He found the Shannon had shipped all the chests marked with her name; and the captain and mate of the Proserpine were beginning to ship theirs. He paddled under the Proserpine's stern.

Captain Hudson, a rough salt, sang out, and asked him roughly what he wanted there.

"Oh, it is all right," said the mate; "he is come for your receipt and Hewitt's. Be smart, now, men; two on board, sixteen to come."

Seaton saw the chests marked Proserpine stowed in the Proserpine, and went ashore with Captain Hewitt's receipt for forty cases on board the Shannon, and Captain Hudson's of eighteen on board the Proserpine.

As he landed he met Lloyds' agent, and told him what a valuable freight he had just shipped. That gentleman merely remarked that both ships were underwritten in Sydney by the owners; but the freight was insured in London, no doubt.

There was still something about this business Seaton did not quite like; perhaps it was in the haste of the shipments, or in the manner of the mate. At all events, it was too slight and subtle to be communicated to others with any hope of convincing them; and, moreover, Seaton could not but own to himself that he hated Wardlaw, and was, perhaps, no fair judge of his acts, and even of the acts of his servants.

And soon a blow fell that drove the matter out of his head and his heart. Miss Helen Rolleston called at the office, and, standing within a few feet of him, handed Hardcastle a letter from Arthur Wardlaw, directing that the ladies' cabin on board the Shannon should be placed at her disposal.

Hardcastle bowed low to Beauty and Station, and promised her the best possible accommodation on board the Shannon, bound for England next week.

As she retired, she cast one quiet glance round the office in search of Seaton's beard. But he had reduced its admired luxuriance, and trimmed it to a narrow mercantile point. She did not know his other features from Adam, and little thought that young man, bent double over his paper, was her preserver and *protégé;* still less that he was at this moment cold as ice, and quivering with misery from head to foot, because her own lips had just told him she was going to England in the Shannon.

Heart-broken, but still loving nobly, Seaton dragged himself down to the harbor, and went slowly on board the Shannon to secure Miss Rolleston every comfort.

Then, sick at heart as he was, he made inquiries into the condition of the vessel which was to be trusted with so precious a freight; and the old boatman who was rowing him, hearing him make these inquiries, told him he himself was always about, and had noticed the Shannon's pumps were going every blessed night.

Seaton carried this intelligence directly to Lloyds' agent; he overhauled the ship, and ordered her into the graving dock for repairs.

Then Seaton, for White and Co., wrote to Miss Rolleston that the Shannon was not seaworthy, and could not sail for a month, at the least.

The lady simply acknowledged Messrs. White's communication, and Seaton breathed again.

Wardlaw had made Miss Rolleston promise him faithfully to sail that month in his ship the Shannon. Now she was a slave to her word, and constant of purpose; so, when she found she could not sail in the Shannon, she called again on Messrs. White, and took her passage

in the Proserpine. The essential thing to her mind was to sail when she had promised, and to go in a ship that belonged to her lover.

The Proserpine was to sail in ten days.

Seaton inquired into the state of the Proserpine. She was a good, sound vessel, and there was no excuse for detaining her.

Then he wrestled long and hard with the selfish part of his great love. Instead of turning sullen, he set himself to carry out Helen Rolleston's will. He went on board the Proserpine and chose her the best stern cabin.

General Rolleston had ordered Helen's cabin to be furnished, and the agent had put in the usual things, such as standing bedstead with drawers beneath, chest of drawers, small table, two chairs, wash-stand, looking-glass, and swinging lamp.

But Seaton made several visits to the ship, and effected the following arrangements at his own cost. He provided a neat cocoa-mat for her cabin deck for comfort and foot-hold; he unshipped the regular six-paned stern windows, and put in single-pane plate glass; he fitted venetian blinds, and hung two little rose-colored curtains to each of the windows; all so arranged as to be easily removed in case it should be necessary to ship dead lights in heavy weather. He glazed the door leading to her bath-room and quarter gallery with plate glass; he provided a light, easy chair, slung and fitted with grummets, to be hung on hooks screwed into the beams in the midship of the cabin. On this Helen could sit and read, and so become insensible to the motion of the ship. He fitted a small case of books, having a batten, secured from falling out by a button, which could be raised when a book might be wanted; he fixed a strike-bell in her maid's cabin, communicating with two strikers in Helen's

cabin; he selected books, taking care that the voyages and travels were prosperous ones. No "Seaman's Recorder," "Life-boat Journal," or "Shipwrecks and Disasters in the British Navy."

Her cabin was the after-cabin on the starboard side: was entered through the cuddy; had a door communicating with the quarter gallery; two stern windows, and a dead-eye on deck. The maid's cabin was the port after-cabin; doors opened into cuddy and quarter gallery. And a fine trouble Miss Rolleston had to get a maid to accompany her; but at last a young woman offered to go with her for high wages, demurely suppressing the fact that she had just married one of the sailors, and would have gladly gone for nothing. Her name was Jane Holt, and her husband's Michael Donovan.

In one of Seaton's visits to the Proserpine he detected the mate and the captain talking together, and looking at him with unfriendly eyes—scowling at him would hardly be too strong a word.

However, he was in no state of mind to care much how two animals in blue jackets received his acts of self-martyrdom. He was there to do the last kind offices of despairing love for the angel that had crossed his dark path, and illumined it for a moment, to leave it now forever.

At last the fatal evening came; her last in Sydney.

Then Seaton's fortitude, sustained no longer by the feverish stimulus of doing kindly acts for her, began to give way, and he desponded deeply.

At nine in the evening he crept upon General Rolleston's lawn, where he had first seen her. He sat down in sullen despair, upon the very spot.

Then he came nearer the house. There was a lamp in the dining-room; he looked in and saw her.

She was seated at her father's knee, looking up at him fondly; her hand was in his. The tears were in their

eyes: she had no mother; he no son; they loved one another devotedly. This, their tender gesture, and their sad silence, spoke volumes to any one that had known sorrow. Poor Seaton sat down on the dewy grass outside, and wept, because she was weeping.

Her father sent her to bed early. Seaton watched, as he had often done before, till her light went out; and then he flung himself on the wet grass, and stared at the sky in utter misery.

The mind is often clearest in the middle of the night; and all of a sudden he saw, as if written on the sky, that she was going to England expressly to marry Arthur Wardlaw.

At this revelation he started up, stung with hate as well as love, and his tortured mind rebelled furiously. He repeated his vow that this should never be; and soon a scheme came into his head to prevent it; but it was a project so wild and dangerous, that, even as his heated brain hatched it, his cooler judgment said, "Fly, madman, fly! or this love will *destroy* you!"

He listened to the voice of reason, and in another minute he was out of the premises. He fluttered to his lodgings.

When he got there he could not go in; he turned and fluttered about the streets, not knowing or caring whither; his mind was in a whirl; and, what with his bodily fever, and his boiling heart, passion began to overpower reason, that had held out so gallantly till now. He found himself at the harbor, staring with wild and bloodshot eyes at the Proserpine, he, who an hour ago, had seen that he had but one thing to do — to try and forget young Wardlaw's bride. He groaned aloud and ran wildly back into the town. He hurried up and down one narrow street, raging inwardly, like some wild beast in its den.

By and by his mood changed, and he hung round a lamp-post, and fell to moaning and lamenting his hard fate, and hers.

A policeman came up, took him for a maudlin drunkard, and half-advised, half-admonished him, to go home.

At that he gave a sort of fierce, despairing snarl, and ran into the next street, to be alone.

In this street he found a shop open, and lighted, though it was but five o'clock in the morning. It was a barber's, whose customers were working-people. HAIR-CUTTING, SIXPENCE. EASY SHAVING, THREEPENCE. HOT COFFEE, FOURPENCE THE CUP. Seaton's eye fell upon this shop. He looked at it fixedly a moment from the opposite side of the way, and then hurried on.

He turned suddenly and came back. He crossed the road and entered the shop. The barber was leaning over the stove, removing a can of boiling water from the fire to the hob. He turned at the sound of Seaton's step, and revealed an ugly countenance, rendered sinister by a squint.

Seaton dropped into a chair, and said, "I want my beard taken off."

The man looked at him, if it could be called looking *at* him, and said dryly, "Oh, do ye? How much am I to have for that job?"

"You know your own charge."

"Of course I do; threepence a chin."

"Very well. Be quick, then."

"Stop a bit: that is my charge to working folk. I must have something more off you."

"Very well, man, I'll pay you double."

"My price to you is ten shillings."

"Why, what is that for?" asked Seaton, in some alarm; he thought, in his confusion, the man must have read his heart.

"I'll tell ye why," said the squinting barber. "No, I won't; I'll show ye." He brought a small mirror, and suddenly clapped it before Seaton's eyes. Seaton started at his own image; wild, ghastly, and the eyes so bloodshot. The barber chuckled. This start was an extorted compliment to his own sagacity. "Now wasn't I right?" said he; "did I ought to take the beard off such a mug as that — for less than ten shillings?"

"I see," groaned Seaton; "you think I have committed some crime. One man sees me weeping with misery; he calls me a drunkard: another sees me pale with the anguish of my breaking heart; he calls me a felon. May God's curse light on him and you, and all mankind!"

"All right," said the squinting barber, apathetically; "my price is ten bob, whether or no."

Seaton felt in his pockets. "I have not got the money about me," said he.

"Oh, I'm not particular; leave your watch."

Seaton handed this squinting vampire his watch without another word, and let his head fall upon his breast.

The barber cut his beard close with the scissors, and made trivial remarks from time to time; but received no reply.

At last, extortion having put him in a good humor, he said, "Don't be so down-hearted, my lad. You are not the first that has got into trouble, and had to change faces."

Seaton vouchsafed no reply.

The barber shaved him clean, and was astonished at the change, and congratulated him. "Nobody will ever know you," said he; "and I'll tell you why; your mouth it is inclined to turn up a little; now a mustache it bends down, and that alters such a mouth as yours

entirely. But, I'll tell you what, taking off this beard shows me something: *you are a gentleman.* Make it a sovereign, sir."

Seaton staggered out of the place without a word.

"Sulky, eh?" muttered the barber. He gathered up some of the long hair he had cut off Seaton's chin with his scissors, admired it, and put it away in paper.

While thus employed, a regular customer looked in for his cup of coffee. It was the policeman who had taken Seaton for a convivial soul.

CHAPTER VII.

General Rolleston's servants made several trips to the Proserpine, carrying boxes, etc.

But Helen herself clung to the house till the last moment. "Oh, papa!" she cried, "I need all my resolution, all my good faith, to keep my word with Arthur, and leave you. Why, why did I promise? Why am I such a slave to my word?"

"Because," said the old General, with a voice not so firm as usual, "I have always told you that a lady is not to be inferior to a gentleman in any virtue, except courage. I've heard my mother say so often; and I've taught it to my Helen. And, my girl, where would be the merit of keeping our word, if we only kept it when it cost us nothing!"

He promised to come after, in three months at farthest; and the brave girl dried her tears, as well as she could, not to add to the sadness he fought against as gallantly as he had often fought the enemies of his country.

The Proserpine was to sail at two o'clock; at a little before one, a gentleman boarded her, and informed the captain that he was a missionary, the Rev. John Hazel, returning home, after a fever; and wished to take a berth in the Proserpine.

The mate looked him full in the face; and then told him there was very little accommodation for passengers, and it had all been secured by White and Co., for a young lady and her servants.

Mr. Hazel replied that his means were small, and

moderate accommodation would serve him; but he must go to England without delay.

Captain Hudson put in his gracious word: "Then jump off the jetty at high tide and swim there; no room for black coats in my ship."

Mr. Hazel looked from one to the other piteously. "Show me some mercy, gentlemen; my very life depends on it."

"Very sorry, sir," said the mate; "but it is impossible. There's the Shannon, you can go in her."

"But she is under repairs; so I am told."

"Well, there are a hundred and fifty carpenters on to her; and she will come out of port in our wake."

"Now, sir," said Hudson, roughly, "bundle down the ship's side again, if you please; this is a busy time. Hy!—rig the whip; here's the lady coming off to us."

The missionary heaved a deep sigh, and went down into the boat that had brought him. But he was no sooner seated than he ordered the boatmen, somewhat peremptorily, to pull ashore as fast as they could row. His boat met the Rollestons, father and daughter, coming out, and he turned his pale face, and eyed them as he passed. Helen Rolleston was struck with that sorrowful countenance, and, when the boats had passed each other, she whispered her father, "That poor clergyman has just left the ship." She made sure he had been taking leave of some beloved one, bound for England. General Rolleston looked round, but the wan face was no longer visible.

They were soon on board, and received with great obsequiousness. Helen was shown her cabin, and, observing the minute and zealous care that had been taken of her comfort, she said, "Somebody who loves me has been here," and turned her brimming eyes on her father. He looked a little puzzled, and said nothing.

Father and daughter were then left alone in the cabin, till the ship began to heave her anchor (she lay just at the mouth of the harbor), and then the boatswain was sent to give General Rolleston warning. Helen came up with him, pale and distressed. They exchanged a last embrace, and General Rolleston went down the ship's side. Helen hung over the bulwarks and waved her last adieu, though she could hardly see him for her tears.

At this moment a four-oared boat swept alongside; and Mr. Hazel came on board again. He presented Hudson a written order to give the Rev. John Hazel a passage in the small berth abreast the main hatches. It was signed for "White and Co., James Seaton;" and was indorsed with a stamped acknowledgment of the passage money, twenty-seven pounds.

Hudson and Wylie, the mate, put their heads together over this. The missionary saw them consulting, and told them he had mentioned their mysterious conduct to Messrs. White and Co., and that Mr. Seaton had promised to stop the ship if their authority was resisted. "And I have paid my passage money, and will not be turned out now except by force," said the reverend gentleman, quietly.

Wylie's head was turned away from Mr. Hazel's, and on its profile a most gloomy, vindictive look, so much so, that Mr. Hazel was startled when the man turned his front face to him with a jolly, genial air, and said, "Well, sir, the truth is, we seamen don't want passengers aboard ships of this class: they get in our way whenever it blows a capful. However, since you are here, make yourself as comfortable as you can."

"There, that is enough palaver," said the captain, in his offensive way. "Hoist the parson's traps aboard, and sheer off, you shore boat! Anchor's apeak."

He then gave his orders in stentorian roars; the anchor was hove up, catted, and fished; one sail went up after another, the Proserpine's head came round, and away she bore for England with a fair wind.

General Rolleston went slowly and heavily home, and often turned his head and looked wistfully at the ship, putting out wing upon wing, and carrying off his child like a tiny prey.

To change the comparison, it was only a tender vine detached from a great sturdy elm: yet the tree, thus relieved of its delicate encumbrance, felt bare; and a soft thing was gone, that, seeking protection, had bestowed warmth; had nestled and curled between the world's cold wind and that stalwart stem.

As soon as he got home he lighted a cigar, and set to work to console himself by reflecting that it was but a temporary parting, since he had virtually resigned his post, and was only waiting in Sydney till he should have handed his papers in order over to his successor, and settled one or two private matters that could not take three months.

When he had smoked his cigar, and reasoned away his sense of desolation, Nature put out her hand, and took him by the breast, and drew him gently up-stairs to take a look at his beloved daughter's bedroom, by way of seeing the last of her.

The room had one window looking north, and another west: the latter commanded a view of the bay. General Rolleston looked down at the floor, littered with odds and ends — the dead leaves of dress that fall about a lady in the great process of packing — and then gazed through the window at the flying Proserpine.

He sighed, and lighted another cigar. Before he had half finished it, he stooped down and took up a little

bow of ribbon that lay on the ground, and put it quietly in his bosom. In this act he was surprised by Sarah Wilson, who had come up to sweep all such waifs and strays into her own box. "La, sir," said she, rather crossly, "why didn't you tell me, and I'd have tidied the room: it is all hugger-mugger, with miss a-leaving."

And with this she went to tidying the room. General Rolleston's eye followed her movements, and he observed amongst the litter a white handkerchief stained with blood. "What!" said he, "has she had an accident; cut her finger?"

"No, sir," said Wilson, and with a certain air of restraint that made him uneasy.

He examined the girl's face narrowly, and then the handkerchief; the blood was of a pale red color. Rolleston had seen a similarly stained handkerchief fifteen years before, in the hands of his young wife a few months before she died of consumption.

"Sarah," faltered Rolleston, "in God's name, why was I never told of this?"

"Indeed, sir," said Wilson, eagerly, "you must not blame me, sir. It was as much as my place was worth to tell you. Miss is a young lady that will be obeyed; and she give me strict orders not to let you know: but she is gone now; and I always thought it was a pity she kept it so dark; but as I was saying, sir, she *would* be obeyed."

"Kept what so dark?"

"Why, sir, her spitting of blood at times: and turning so thin by what she used to be, poor dear young lady."

General Rolleston groaned aloud. He said no more, but kept looking bewildered and helpless, first at the handkerchief and then at the Proserpine that was carrying Helen away, perhaps forever: and his iron features worked with cruel distress; anguish so mute and male,

that the woman Wilson, though not good for much, sat down and shed genuine tears of pity.

But he summoned all his fortitude, told Wilson he could not say she was to blame, she had but obeyed her mistress's orders; and we must all obey orders. "But now," said he, "it is me you ought to obey: tell me, does any doctor attend her?"

"None ever comes here, sir. But, one day, she let fall that she went to Dr. Valentine, him that has the name for disorders of the chest."

In a very few minutes General Rolleston was at Dr. Valentine's house, and asked him bluntly what was the matter with his daughter.

"Disease of the lungs," said the doctor simply.

The unhappy father then begged the doctor to give him his real opinion as to the degree of danger; and Dr. Valentine told him, with some feeling, that the case was not desperate, but was certainly alarming.

Remonstrated with for letting the girl undertake a sea-voyage, he replied rather evasively at first; that the air of Australia disagreed with his patient, and a sea-voyage was more likely to do her good than harm.

General Rolleston pressed the doctor's hand, and went away without another word.

Only he hurried his matters of business; and took his passage in the Shannon.

It was in something of a warrior's spirit that he prepared to follow his daughter and protect her; but often he sighed at the invisible, insidious nature of the foe, and wished it could have been a fair fight of bullets and bayonets, and his own the life at stake.

The Shannon was soon ready for sea.

Wardlaw was at home before this, with his hands full of business; and it is time the reader should be let into

one secret at least, which this merchant had contrived to conceal from the City of London, and from his own father, and from every human creature, except one poor, simple, devoted soul, called Michael Penfold.

There are men, who seem stupid, yet generally go right; there are also clever men, who appear to have the art of blundering wisely: "sapienter descendunt in infernum," as the ancients have it; and some of these latter will even lie on their backs, after a fall, and lift up their voices, and prove to you that in the nature of things they ought to have gone up, and their being down is monstrous; illusory.

Arthur Wardlaw was not quite so clever as all that; but still he misconducted the business of the firm with perfect ability from the first month he entered on it. Like those ambitious railways, which ruin a goodly trunk with excess of branches, not to say twigs, he set to work extending, and extending, and sent the sap of the healthy old concern a-flying to the ends of the earth.

He was not only too ambitious, and not cool enough; he was also unlucky, or under a curse, or something; for things, well conceived, broke down, in his hands, under petty accidents. And, besides, his new correspondents and agents hit him cruelly hard. Then what did he? Why shot good money after bad, and lost both. He could not retrench, for his game was concealment; his father was kept in the dark, and drew his four thousand a year, as usual, and, upon any hesitation in that respect, would have called in an accountant and wound up the concern. But this tax upon the receipts, though inconvenient, was a trifle compared with the series of heavy engagements that were impending. The future was so black, that Wardlaw junior was sore tempted to realize twenty thousand pounds, which a

man in his position could easily do, and fly the country. But this would have been to give up Helen Rolleston; and he loved her too well. His brain was naturally subtle and fertile in expedients; so he brought all its powers to bear on a double problem: how to marry Helen; and restore the concern he had mismanaged to its former state. For this a large sum of money was needed, not less than ninety thousand pounds.

The difficulties were great; but he entered on this project with two advantages. In the first place, he enjoyed excellent credit; in the second, he was not disposed to be scrupulous. He had been cheated several times; and nothing undermines feeble rectitude more than that. Such a man as Wardlaw is apt to establish a sort of account current with humanity.

"Several fellow-creatures have cheated me. Well, I must get as much back, by hook or by crook, from several fellow-creatures."

After much hard thought, he conceived his double master-stroke: and it was to execute this he went out to Australia.

We have seen that he persuaded Helen Rolleston to come to England and be married; but, as to the other part of his project, that is a matter for the reader to watch, as it develops itself.

His first act of business, on reaching England, was to insure the freights of the Proserpine and the Shannon.

He sent Michael Penfold to Lloyds', with the requisite vouchers, including the receipts of the gold merchants. Penfold easily insured the Shannon, whose freight was valued at only six thousand pounds. The Proserpine, with her cargo, and a hundred and thirty thousand pounds of specie to boot, was another matter. Some underwriters had an objection to specie, being subject to theft as well as shipwreck; other underwriters, applied

to by Penfold, acquiesced; others called on Wardlaw himself, to ask a few questions, and he replied to them courteously, but with a certain nonchalance, treating it as an affair which might be big to them, but was not of particular importance to a merchant doing business on his scale.

To one underwriter, Condell, with whom he was on somewhat intimate terms, he said, "I wish I could insure the Shannon, at her value; but that is impossible: the City of London could not do it. The Proserpine brings me some cases of specie, but my true treasure is on board the Shannon. She carries my bride, sir."

"Oh, indeed. Miss Rolleston?"

"Ah, I remember; you have seen her. Then you will not be surprised at a proposal I shall make you. Underwrite the Shannon a million pounds, to be paid by you if harm befalls my Helen. You need not look so astonished; I was only joking; you gentlemen deal with none but substantial values; and, as for me, a million would no more compensate me for losing her, than for losing my own life."

The tears were in his pale eyes as he said these words; and Mr. Condell eyed him with sympathy. But he soon recovered himself, and was the man of business again. "Oh, the specie on board the Proserpine? Well, I was in Australia, you know, and bought that specie myself of the merchants whose names are attached to the receipts. I deposited the cases with White and Co., at Sydney. Penfold will show you the receipt. I instructed Joseph Wylie, mate of the Proserpine, and a trustworthy person, to see them stowed away in the Proserpine, by White and Co. Hudson is a good seaman; and the Proserpine, a new ship, built by Mare. We have nothing to fear but the ordinary perils of the sea."

"So one would think," said Mr. Condell, and took his leave; but, at the door, he hesitated, and then, looking down a little sheepishly, said, "Mr. Wardlaw, may I offer you a piece of advice?"

"Certainly."

"Then, double the insurance on the Shannon, if you can."

With these words he slipped out, evidently to avoid questions he did not intend to answer.

Wardlaw stared after him, stupidly at first, and then stood up and put his hand to his head in a sort of amazement. Then he sat down again, ashy pale, and with the dew on his forehead, and muttered faintly, "Double — the insurance — of the — Shannon!"

Men who walked in crooked paths are very subject to such surprises; doomed, like Ahab, to be pierced, through the joints of their armor, by random shafts; by words uttered in one sense, but conscience interprets them in another.

It took a good many underwriters to insure the Proserpine's freight; but the business was done at last.

Then Wardlaw, who had feigned insouciance so admirably in that part of his interview with Condell, went, without losing an hour, and raised a large sum of money on the insured freight, to meet the bills that were coming due for the gold (for he had paid for most of it in paper at short dates), and also other bills that were approaching maturity. This done, he breathed again, safe for a month or two from everything short of a general panic, and full of hope from his coming master-stroke. But two months soon pass when a man has a flock of kites in the air. Pass? They fly. So now he looked out anxiously for his Australian ships; and went to Lloyds'

every day to hear if either had been seen, or heard of by steamers, or by faster sailing vessels than themselves.

And, though Condell had underwritten the Proserpine to the tune of eight thousand pounds, yet still his mysterious words rang strangely in the merchant's ears and made him so uneasy, that he employed a discreet person to sound Condell as to what he meant by "double the insurance of the Shannon."

It turned out to be the simplest affair in the world; Condell had secret information that the Shannon was in bad repair; so he had advised his friend to insure her heavily. For the same reason, he declined to underwrite her freight himself.

With respect to those ships, our readers already know two things, of which Wardlaw himself, nota bene, had no idea; namely, that the Shannon had sailed last, instead of first, and that Miss Rolleston was not on board of her, but in the Proserpine, two thousand miles ahead.

To that, your superior knowledge, we, posters of the sea and land, are about to make a large addition, and relate things strange, but true. While that anxious and plotting merchant strains his eyes seaward, trying hard to read the future, we carry you, in a moment of time, across the Pacific, and board the leading vessel, the good ship Proserpine, homeward bound.

The ship left Sydney with a fair wind, but soon encountered adverse weather, and made slow progress, being close hauled, which was her worst point of sailing. She pitched a good deal, and that had a very ill effect on Miss Rolleston. She was not sea-sick, but thoroughly out of sorts; and, in one week, became perceptibly paler and thinner than when she started.

The young clergyman, Mr. Hazel, watched her with respectful anxiety, and this did not escape her feminine

observation. She noted quietly that those dark eyes of his followed her with a mournful tenderness, but withdrew their gaze when she looked at him. Clearly, he was interested in her, but had no desire to intrude upon her attention. He would bring up the squabs for her, and some of his own wraps, when she stayed on deck, and was prompt with his arm when the vessel lurched; and showed her those other little attentions, which are called for on board ship; but without a word. Yet, when she thanked him in the simplest and shortest way, his great eyes flashed with pleasure, and the color mounted to his very temples.

Engaged young ladies are, for various reasons, more sociable with the other sex, than those who are still on the universal mock-defensive; a ship, like a distant country, thaws even English reserve, and women in general are disposed to admit ecclesiastics to certain privileges. No wonder then that Miss Rolleston, after a few days, met Mr. Hazel half-way; and they made acquaintance on board the Proserpine; in monosyllables at first; but, the ice once fairly broken, the intercourse of mind became rather rapid.

At first it was a mere intellectual exchange, but one very agreeable to Miss Rolleston; for a fine memory, and omnivorous reading from his very boyhood, with the habit of taking notes, and reviewing them, had made Mr. Hazel a walking dictionary, and a walking essayist if required.

But, when it came to something, which most of all the young lady had hoped from this temporary acquaintance, viz., religious instruction, she found him indeed as learned on that as on other topics, but cold, and devoid of unction; so much so, that one day she said to him, "I can hardly believe you have ever been a missionary." But at that he seemed so distressed, that she was sorry for him, and

said, sweetly, "Excuse me, Mr. Hazel, my remark was in rather bad taste, I fear."

"Not at all," said he. "Of course I am unfit for missionary work, or I should not be here."

Miss Rolleston took a good look at him, but said nothing. However, his reply, and her perusal of his countenance, satisfied her that he was a man with very little petty vanity and petty irritability.

Day succeeded day, with a monotony which had been unendurable to Helen but for the variety she found in her fellow-passenger. The true modesty of learning made his mind, like a library, mute until consulted. Shallow streams are garrulous. She had studied botany; she observed that he was studious to conceal that he was her master in that science. A conversation between him and the ship's surgeon, drew from the latter an expression of surprise to find the clergyman's knowledge of chemistry exceeded his own. Helen did not understand a word of the discussion, but she read the faces of the two men, and saw which was out of his depth.

One morning, after ten days' murky weather, the sky suddenly cleared, and a rare opportunity occurred to take an observation. Hazel suggested to Wylie, the mate, the propriety of taking advantage of the moment, as the fog-bank, out of which they had just emerged, would soon envelop them again, and they had not more than an hour or so of such weather available. The man gave a shuffling answer. So Hazel sought the captain in his cabin. He found him in bed. He was dead drunk.

On a shelf lay the instruments. These Hazel took, and then looked round for the chronometers. They were safely locked in their cases.

He carried the instruments on deck, together with a book of tables, and quietly began to make preparations,

at which Wylie, arresting his walk, gazed with utter astonishment.

"Now, Mr. Wylie, I want the key of the chronometer cases."

"Here is a chronometer, Mr. Hazel," said Helen, very innocently, "if that is all you want."

Hazel smiled, and explained that a ship's clock is made to keep the most exact time; that he did not require the time of the spot where they were, but Greenwich time.

He took the watch, however. It was a large one for a lady to carry; but it was one of Frodsham's masterpieces — for was it not Arthur Wardlaw's gift?

"Why, Miss Rolleston," said he, "this watch must be two hours slow. It marks ten o'clock; it is now nearly midday. Ah, I see," he added, with a smile, "you have wound it regularly every day; but you have forgotten to set it daily. Indeed, you may be right; it would be a useless trouble, since we change our longitude hourly. Well, let us presume that this watch shows the exact time at Sydney, as I presume it does; I can work the ship's reckoning from that meridian, instead of that of Greenwich."

And he set about doing it. He looked up, and saw that the crew were assembling as near the quarter-deck as discipline permitted.

"Mr. Wylie, would you kindly obtain a chart for me?"

The mate betrayed some curiosity at first; but now, when he perceived that the crew had become witnesses of the captain's incapacity to fulfil this important duty, he answered doggedly, —

"I think, sir, you took a great liberty in overhauling the skipper's books and tackle."

"We have not had an observation for ten days.

Surely, it is necessary to find the position of the ship," remonstrated Hazel.

"He'll make you find yours, when he comes on deck," muttered the man.

Hazel stepped up to him, and whispered, —

"The captain is drunk, senselessly drunk. Do not compel me to remember the fact, and report it at Lloyds', and to the owners, when we arrive in England."

Wylie gazed stupidly for a moment into Hazel's face, and then shuffled off, and disappeared into the captain's cabin. In a few moments he emerged with the chronometers and the charts, bearing also the thanks of Captain Hudson, who was down with bilious fever. Hazel received the message and the instruments without remark. He verified Miss Rolleston's chronometer, and, allowing for difference of time, found it to be accurate. He returned it to her, and proceeded to work on the chart. The men looked on; so did Wylie. After a few moments Hazel read as follows: West longitude, 146° 53′ 18″. South latitude, 35° 24′. The Island of Oparo and the Four Crowns, distant 420 miles on the N.N.E. The white banks of fog prevailing on the south seem to indicate ice-floes in that quarter; Barometer ——; Thermometer in the sea as compared with yesterday, ——. "There," said he, handing the paper to Wylie, "I leave these to be filled in by the captain. I presume he keeps some such record in his log."

Wylie removed the instruments, the men retired to the forecastle, and Miss Rolleston fixed her large soft eyes on the young clergyman with the undisguised admiration a woman is apt to feel for what she does not understand.

One day they were discoursing of gratitude; and Mr. Hazel said he had a poor opinion of those persons, who speak of "the burden of gratitude," and make a fuss about being "laid under an obligation."

"As for me," said he, "I have owed such a debt, and found the sense of it very sweet."

"But perhaps you were always hoping to make a return," said Helen.

"That I was: hoping against hope."

"Do you think people are grateful, in general?"

"No, Miss Rolleston, I do not."

"Well, I think they are. To me, at least. Why, I have experienced gratitude, even in a convict. It was a poor man, who had been transported, for something or other, and he begged papa to take him for his gardener. Papa did, and he was so grateful that, do you know, he suspected our house was to be robbed, and he actually watched in the garden night after night: and, what do you think? the house *was* attacked by a whole gang; but poor Mr. Seaton confronted them and shot one, and was wounded cruelly; but he beat them off for us; and was not that gratitude?"

While she was speaking so earnestly Mr. Hazel's blood seemed to run through his veins like heavenly fire, but he said nothing, and the lady resumed, with gentle fervor: "Well, we got him a clerk's place in a shipping-office, and heard no more of him; but he did not forget us: my cabin here was fitted up with every comfort and every delicacy. I thanked papa for it; but he looked so blank, I saw directly he knew nothing about it; and now, I think of it, it was Mr. Seaton. I am positive it was. Poor fellow! And I should not even know him if I saw him."

Mr. Hazel observed, in a low voice, that Mr. Seaton's conduct did not seem wonderful to him. "Still," said he, "one is glad to find there is some good left even in a criminal."

"A criminal!" cried Helen Rolleston, firing up. "Pray, who says he was a criminal? Mr. Hazel, once

for all, no friend of mine ever deserves such a name as that. A friend of mine may commit some great error or imprudence; but that is all. The poor grateful soul was never guilty of any downright wickedness: *that stands to reason.*"

Mr. Hazel did not encounter this feminine logic with his usual ability; he muttered something or other, with a trembling lip, and left her so abruptly, that she asked herself whether she had inadvertently said anything that could have offended him; and awaited an explanation. But none came. The topic was never revived by Mr. Hazel; and his manner, at their next meeting, showed he liked her none the worse that she stood up for her friends.

The wind steady from the west for two whole days, and the Proserpine showed her best sailing qualities, and ran four hundred and fifty miles in that time.

Then came a dead calm, and the sails flapped lazily, and the masts described an arc; and the sun broiled; and the sailors whistled; and the captain drank; and the mate encouraged him.

During this calm, Miss Rolleston fell downright ill, and quitted the deck. Then Mr. Hazel was very sad: borrowed all the books in the ship, and read them, and took notes; and when he had done this, he was at leisure to read men, and so began to study Hiram Hudson, Joseph Wylie, and others, and take a few notes about them.

From these we select some that are better worth the reader's attention, than anything we could relate in our own persons at this stagnant part of the story.

PASSAGES FROM MR. HAZEL'S DIARY.

"Characters on board the Proserpine.

"There are two sailors, messmates, who have formed an antique friendship; their names are John Welch, and Samuel Cooper. Welch is a very able seaman and a chatterbox. Cooper is a good sailor, but very silent; only what he does say is much to the purpose.

"The gabble of Welch is agreeable to the silent Cooper; and Welch admires Cooper's taciturnity.

"I asked Welch what made him like Cooper so much. And he said, 'Why, you see, sir, he is my messmate, for one thing, and a seaman that knows his work; and then he has been well eddycated, and he knows when to hold his tongue, does Sam.'

"I asked Cooper why he was so fond of Welch. He only grunted in an uneasy way at first; but when I pressed for a reply, he let out two words — 'Capital company.' And got away from me.

"Their friendship, though often roughly expressed, is really a tender and touching sentiment. I think either of these sailors would bare his back and take a dozen lashes in place of his messmate. I too once thought I had made such a friend. Eheu!

"Both Cooper and Welch seem, by their talk, to consider the ship a living creature. Cooper chews. Welch only smokes, and often lets his pipe out: he is so voluble.

"Captain Hudson is quite a character: or, I might say, two characters; for he is one man when he is sober, and another when he is the worse for liquor: and that I am sorry to see is very often. Captain Hudson, sober, is a rough, bearish seaman, with a quick, experienced eye, that takes in every rope in the ship, as he walks up and down his quarter-deck. He either evades, or bluntly

declines conversation, and gives his whole mind to sailing his ship.

"Captain Hudson, drunk, is a garrulous man, who seems to have drifted back into the past. He comes up to you and talks of his own accord, and always about himself, and what he did fifteen or twenty years since. He forgets whatever has occurred half an hour ago; and his eye, which was an eagle's, is now a mole's. He no longer sees what his sailors are doing alow or aloft; to be sure he no longer cares; his present ship may take care of herself while he is talking of his past ones. But the surest indicia of inebriety in Hudson are these two. First, his nose is red. Secondly, he discourses upon a seaman's *duty to his employers.* Ebrius rings the changes on his 'duty to his employers' till drowsiness attacks his hearers. Cicero de Officiis was all very well at a certain period of one's life: but 'bibulus nauta de officiis' is rather too much.

"N.B. Except when his nose is red, not a word about his 'duty to his employers.' That phrase, like a fine lady, never ventures into the morning air. It is purely post-prandial, and sacred to occasions when he is utterly neglecting his duty to his employers and to everybody else.

"All this is ridiculous enough, but somewhat alarming. To think that *her* precious life should be intrusted to the care and skill of so unreliable a captain!

"Joseph Wylie, the mate, is less eccentric, but even more remarkable. He is one of those powerfully built fellows, whom Nature, one would think, constructed to gain all their ends by force and directness. But no such thing; he goes about as softly as a cat; is always popping up out of holes and corners; and I can see he watches me, and tries to hear what I say to her. He is civil to me when I speak to him; yet, I notice, he avoids

me quietly. Altogether, there is something about him that puzzles me. Why was he so reluctant to let me on board as a passenger? Why did he tell a downright falsehood? For he said there was no room for me; yet, even now, there are two cabins vacant, and he has taken possession of them.

"The mate of this ship has several barrels of spirits in his cabin, or rather cabins, and it is he who makes the captain drunk. I learned this from one of the boys. This looks ugly. I fear Wylie is a bad, designing man, who wishes to ruin the captain, and so get his place. But, meantime, the ship might be endangered by this drunkard's misconduct. I shall watch Wylie closely, and perhaps put the captain on his guard against this false friend.

"Last night, a breeze got up about sunset, and H—— R—— came on deck for half an hour. I welcomed her as calmly as I could; but I felt my voice tremble, and my heart throb. She told me the voyage tired her much; but it was the last she should have to make. How strange, how hellish (God forgive me for saying so!) it seems that *she* should love *him*. But, does she love him? Can she love him? Could she love him if she knew all? Know him she shall before she marries him. For the present, be still, my heart.

"She soon went below and left me desolate. I wandered all about the ship, and, at last, I came upon the inseparables, Welch and Cooper. They were squatted on the deck, and Welch's tongue was going as usual. He was talking about this Wylie, and saying that, in all his ships, he had never known such a mate as this; why, the captain was under his thumb. He then gave a string of captains, each of whom would have given his mate a round dozen at the gangway, if he had taken so much on him, as this one does.

"'Grog!' suggested Cooper, in extenuation.

"Welch admitted Wylie was liberal with that, and friendly enough with the men; but, still, he preferred to see a ship commanded by the captain, and not by a lubber like Wylie.

"I expressed some surprise at this term, and said I had envied Wylie's nerves in a gale of wind we encountered early in the voyage.

"The talking sailor explained, 'In course, he has been to sea afore this, and weathered many a gale. But so has the cook. That don't make a man a sailor. You ask him how to send down a to'-gallant yard, or gammon a bowsprit, or even mark a lead line, and he'll stare at ye, like Old Nick, when the angel caught him with the red-hot tongs, and questioned him out of the Church Catechism. Ask Sam there, if ye don't believe me. Sam, what do you think of this Wylie for a seaman?'

"Cooper could not afford anything so precious, in his estimate of things, as a word; but he lifted a great brawny hand, and gave a snap with his finger and thumb, that disposed of the mate's pretensions to seamanship more expressively than words could have done it.

"The breeze has freshened, and the ship glides rapidly through the water, bearing us all homeward. H—— R—— has resumed her place upon the deck; and all seems bright again. I ask myself how we existed without the sight of her.

"This morning the wind shifted to the south-west; the captain surprised us by taking in sail. But his sober eye had seen something more than ours; for at noon it blew a gale, and by sunset it was deemed prudent to bring the ship's head to the wind, and we are now lying-to. The ship lurches, and the wind howls through the bare rigging; but she rides buoyantly, and no danger is apprehended.

"Last night, as I lay in my cabin, unable to sleep, I heard some heavy blows strike the ship's side repeatedly, causing quite a vibration. I felt alarmed, and went out to tell the captain. But I was obliged to go on my hands and knees, such was the force of the wind. Passing the mate's cabin, I heard sounds that made me listen acutely; and I then found the blows were being struck inside the ship. I got to the captain and told him. 'Oh,' said he, 'ten to one it's the mate nailing down his chests, or the like.' But I assured him the blows struck the side of the ship, and, at my earnest request, he came out and listened. He swore a great oath, and said the lubber would be through the ship's side. He then tried the cabin door, but it was locked.

"The sounds ceased directly.

"We called to the mate, but received no reply for a long time. At last Wylie came out of the gun-room, looking rather pale, and asked what was the matter.

"I told him he ought to know best, for the blows were heard where he had just come from.

"'Blows!' said he; 'I believe you. Why, a tierce of butter had got adrift, and was bumping up and down the hold like thunder.' He then asked us whether that was what we had disturbed him for, entered his cabin, and almost slammed the door in our faces.

"I remarked to the captain on his disrespectful conduct. The captain was civil, and said I was right; he was a cross-grained, unmanageable brute, and he wished he was out of the ship. 'But you see, sir, he has got the ear of the merchant ashore; and so I am obliged to hold a candle to the devil, as the saying is.' He then fired a volley of oaths and abuse at the offender; and, not to encourage foul language, I retired to my cabin.

"The wind declined towards day-break, and the ship

re-commenced her voyage at eight A.M.; but under treble reefed topsails, and reefed courses.

"I caught the captain and mate talking together in the friendliest way possible. That Hudson is a humbug; there is some mystery between him and the mate.

"To-day H—— R—— was on deck for several hours, conversing sweetly, and looking like the angel she is. But happiness soon flies from me: a steamer came in sight, bound for Sydney. She signalled us to heave-to, and send a boat. This was done, and the boat brought back a letter for her. It seems they took us for the Shannon, in which ship she was expected.

"The letter was from *him*. How her cheek flushed and her eye beamed as she took it! And oh, the sadness, the agony that stood beside her unheeded!

"I left the deck; I could not have contained myself. What a thing is wealth! By wealth, that wretch can stretch out his hand across the ocean, and put a letter into her hand under my very eye. Away goes all that I have gained by being near her, while he is far away. He is not in England now — he is here. His odious presence has driven me from her. Oh, that I could be a child again, or in my grave, to get away from this Hell of Love and Hate."

At this point, we beg leave to take the narrative into our own hands again.

Mr. Hazel actually left the deck to avoid the sight of Helen Rolleston's flushed cheek and beaming eyes, reading Arthur Wardlaw's letter.

And here we might as well observe that he retired not merely because the torture was hard to bear. He had some disclosures to make, on reaching England; but his good sense told him this was not the time, or the place,

to make them, nor Helen Rolleston the person to whom, in the first instance, they ought to be made.

While he tries to relieve his swelling heart by putting its throbs on paper (and, in truth, this is some faint relief, for want of which many a less unhappy man than Hazel has gone mad), let us stay by the lady's side, and read her letter with her.

RUSSELL SQUARE, Dec. 15, 1864.

MY DEAR LOVE, — Hearing that the Antelope steam-packet was going to Sydney, by way of Cape Horn, I have begged the captain, who is under some obligations to me, to keep a good lookout for the Shannon, homeward bound, and board her with these lines, weather permitting.

Of course, the chances are you will not receive them at sea; but still you possibly may; and my heart is so full of you, I seize any excuse for overflowing; and then I picture to myself that bright face reading an unexpected letter in mid ocean, and so I taste beforehand the greatest pleasure my mind can conceive — the d light of giving you pleasure, my own sweet Helen.

News, I have very little. You know how deeply and devotedly you are beloved — know it so well that I feel words are almost wasted in repeating it. Indeed, the time, I hope, is at hand when the word love will hardly be mentioned between us. For my part, I think it will be too visible in every act, and look, and word of mine, to need repetition. We do not speak much about the air we live in. We breathe it, and speak with it, not of it.

I suppose all lovers are jealous. I think I should go mad if you were to give me a rival; but then I do not understand that ill-natured jealousy which would rob the beloved object of all affections but the one. I know my Helen loves her father — loves him, perhaps, as well or better than she does me. Well, in spite of that, I love him, too. Do you know, I never see that erect form, that model of courage and probity come into a room, but I say to myself, 'Here comes my benefactor; but for this man there would be no Helen in the

world.' Well, dearest, an unexpected circumstance has given me a little military influence (these things do happen in the City); and I really believe that, what with his acknowledged merits (I am secretly informed that a very high personage said, the other day, he had not received justice), and the influence I speak of, a post will shortly be offered to your father, that will enable him to live, henceforth, in England, with comfort, I might say affluence. Perhaps he might live with us. That depends upon himself.

Looking forward to this, and my own still greater happiness, diverts my mind awhile from the one ever-pressing anxiety. But, alas! it will return. By this time my Helen is on the seas, the terrible, the treacherous, the cruel seas, that spare neither beauty nor virtue, nor the longing hearts at home. I have conducted this office for some years, and thought I knew care and anxiety; but I find I knew neither till now.

I have two ships at sea, the Shannon and the Proserpine. The Proserpine carries eighteen chests of specie, worth a hundred and sixty thousand pounds. I don't care one straw whether she sinks or swims. But the Shannon carries my darling: and every gust at night awakens me, and every day I go into the great room at Lloyds', and watch the anemometer. Oh, God! be merciful, and bring my angel safe to me! Oh, God! be just, and strike her not for my offences!

Besides the direct perils of the sea are some others you might escape by prudence. Pray avoid the night air, for my sake, who could not live if any evil befell you; and be careful in your diet. You were not looking so well as usual, when I left. Would I had words to make you know your own value. Then you would feel it a *duty* to be prudent.

But I must not sadden you with my fears; let me turn to my hopes. How bright they are; what joy, what happiness, is sailing towards me, nearer and nearer every day. I ask myself, what am I that such paradise should be mine?

My love, when we are one, shall we share every thought, or shall I keep commerce, speculation, and its temptations away from your pure spirit? Sometimes I think I should like to have neither thought nor occupation unshared by you; and that you would purify trade itself by your contact; at

other times I say to myself, 'Oh, never soil that angel with your miserable business: but go home to her as if you were going from earth to heaven, for a few blissful hours.' But you shall decide this question, and every other.

Must I close this letter? Must I say no more, though I have scarcely begun?

Yes, I will end it, since, perhaps, you will never see it.

When I have sealed it, I mean to hold it in my clasped hands, and so pray the Almighty to take it safe to you, and to bring you safe to him who can never know peace nor joy till he sees you once more.

Your devoted and anxious lover,

ARTHUR WARDLAW.

Helen Rolleston read this letter more than once. She liked it none the less for being disconnected and unbusiness-like. She had seen her Arthur's business letters; models of courteous conciseness. She did not value such compositions. This one she did. She smiled over it, all beaming and blushing; she kissed it, and read it again, and sat with it in her lap.

But, by and by, her mood changed, and, when Mr. Hazel ventured upon deck again, he found her with her forehead sinking on her extended arm, and the lax hand of that same arm holding the letter. She was crying.

The whole drooping attitude was so lovely, so feminine, yet so sad, that Hazel stood irresolute, looking wistfully at her.

She caught sight of him, and, by a natural impulse, turned gently away, as if to hide her tears. But, the next moment, she altered her mind, and said, with a quiet dignity that came naturally to her at times, "Why should I hide my care from you, sir? Mr. Hazel, may I speak to you *as a clergyman?*"

"Certainly," said Mr. Hazel, in a somewhat faint voice.

She pointed to a seat, and he sat down near her.

She was silent for some time; her lip quivered a little; she was struggling inwardly for that decent composure, which, on certain occasions, distinguishes the lady from the mere woman; and it was with a pretty firm voice she said what follows: —

"I am going to tell you a little secret, one I have kept from my own father. It is — that I have not very long to live."

Her hazel eye rested calmly on his face while she said these words quietly.

He received them with amazement, at first; amazement, that soon deepened into horror. "What do you mean?" he gasped. "What words are these?"

"Thank you for minding so much," said she, sweetly. "I will tell you. I have fits of coughing, not frequent, but violent; and then blood very often comes from my lungs. That is a bad sign, you know. I have been so for four months now, and I am a good deal wasted; my hand used to be very plump, look at it now. Poor Arthur!"

She turned away her head to drop a gentle unselfish tear or two; and Hazel stared with increasing alarm at the lovely, but wasted hand she still held out to him, and glanced, too, at Arthur Wardlaw's letter, held slightly by the beloved fingers.

He said nothing, and, when she looked round again, he was pale and trembling. The revelation was so sudden.

"Pray be calm, sir," said she. "We need speak of this no more. But now, I think, you will not be surprised that I come to you for religious advice and consolation, short as our acquaintance is."

"I am in no condition to give them," said Hazel, in great agitation. "I can think of nothing but how to save you. May Heaven help me and give me wisdom for that."

"This is idle," said Helen Rolleston, gently, but firmly. "I have had the best advice for months, and I get worse; and, Mr. Hazel, I shall never be better. My mother died at my age, and of the same fatal disorder. So aid me to bow to the will of Heaven. Sir, I do not repine at leaving the world; but it does grieve me to think how my departure will affect those whose happiness is very, very dear to me. Especially it will affect one who now is awaiting my arrival in England. But I feel I shall never reach home. Well, you will see him when he comes on board this ship only to hear — to find — " She stopped — her face fell until it touched the paper.

She then looked at the letter, blushed, and hesitated a moment; but ended by giving it to him whom she had applied to as her religious adviser. It was wet with tears.

"Oblige me by reading that. And when you have, I think you will grant me a favor I wish to ask you. Poor fellow! so full of hopes that I am doomed to disappoint."

She rose to hide her emotion, and left Arthur Wardlaw's letter in the hands of him who loved her, if possible, more devotedly than Arthur Wardlaw did; and she walked the deck pensively, little dreaming how strange a thing she had done.

As for Hazel, he was in a situation poignant with agony; only the heavy blow that had just fallen had stunned and benumbed him. He felt a natural repugnance to read this letter. But she had given him no choice. He read it. In reading it he felt a mortal sickness come over him, but he persevered; he read it carefully to the end, and he was examining the signature keenly, when Miss Rolleston rejoined him.

"He loves me; does he not?" said she, wistfully.

Hazel looked half-stupidly in her face for a moment;

then, with a candor which was part of his character, replied, doggedly, "Yes, the man who wrote this letter loves you."

"Then you can pity him, and I may venture to ask you the favor to — It will be a bitter grief and disappointment to him. Will you break it to him as gently as you can; will you say that his Helen — ?"

He handed her the letter, almost thrusting it upon her, and turned away.

"Mr. Hazel! will you not grant me so small a favor?"

The man faced her, his features convulsed with passion. He covered them for a moment with his trembling hands, then, with unutterable love in the gaze he fixed upon her, he answered her pleading with one word:

"No."

CHAPTER VIII.

This point-blank refusal surprised Helen Rolleston; all the more that it was uttered with a certain sullenness, and even asperity, she had never seen till then in this gentle clergyman.

It made her fear she had done wrong in asking it; and she looked ashamed and distressed.

However, the explanation soon followed.

"My business," said he, "is to prolong your precious life; and making up your mind to die is not the way. You shall have no encouragement in such weakness from me. Pray let me be your physician."

"Thank you," said Helen, coldly; "I have my own physician."

"No doubt; but he shows me his incapacity, by allowing you to live on pastry and sweets; things that are utter poison to you. Disease of the lungs is curable, but not by drugs and unwholesome food."

"Mr. Hazel," said the lady, "we will drop the subject, if you please. It has taken an uninteresting turn."

"To you, perhaps; but not to me."

"Excuse me, sir, if you took that real friendly interest in me and my condition I was vain enough to think you might, you would hardly have refused me the first favor I ever asked you; and," drawing herself up proudly, "need I say the last?"

"You are unjust," said Hazel, sadly; "unjust beyond endurance. I refuse you anything that is for your good? I, who would lay down my life with unmixed joy for you!"

"Mr. Hazel!" And she drew back from him with a haughty stare. Then she trembled violently; but soon recovering herself, she said, with overpowering spirit and dignity, "Sir, you have taught me a lesson — a bitter one. You have abused your position, and the confidence it gave me; from this moment, of course we are strangers."

After this, Helen Rolleston and Mr. Hazel never spoke. She walked past him on the deck with cold and haughty contempt.

He quietly submitted to it; and never presumed to say one word to her again. Only, as his determination was equal to his delicacy, Miss Rolleston found, one day, a paper on her table, containing advice as to the treatment of disordered lungs, expressed with apparent coldness, and backed by a string of medical authorities, quoted memoriter.

She sent this back directly, indorsed with a line, in pencil, that she would try hard to live, but should use her own judgment as to the means.

He replied, "Live, with whatever motive you please; only live."

To this she vouchsafed no answer; nor did this unhappy man trouble her again, until an occasion of a very different kind arose.

One fine night he sat on the deck, with his back against the mainmast, in deep melancholy and listlessness, and fell, at last, into a doze, from which he was awakened by a peculiar sound below. It was a beautiful and stilly night; all sounds were magnified; and the father of all rats seemed to be gnawing the ship down below.

Hazel's curiosity was excited, and he went softly down the ladder to see what the sound really was. But that was not so easy, for it proved to be below decks; but he

saw a light glimmering through a small scuttle abaft the mate's cabin, and the sounds were in the neighborhood of that light.

It now flashed upon Mr. Hazel that this was the very quarter where he had heard that mysterious knocking when the ship was lying-to in the gale.

Upon this, a certain degree of vague suspicion began to mingle with his curiosity.

He stood still a moment, listening acutely; then took off his shoes very quietly, and moved with noiseless foot towards the scuttle.

The gnawing still continued.

He put his head through the scuttle, and peered into a dark, dismal place, whose very existence was new to him. It was, in fact, a vacant space between the cargo and the ship's run. This wooden cavern was very narrow, but not less than fifteen feet long. The candle was at the farther end, and between it and Hazel, a man was working, with his flank turned towards the spectator. This partly intercepted the light; but still it revealed in a fitful way the huge ribs of the ship, and her inner skin, that formed the right hand partition, so to speak, of this black cavern; and close outside those gaunt timbers was heard the wash of the sea.

There was something solemn in the close proximity of that tremendous element, and the narrowness of the wooden barrier.

The bare place, and the gentle, monotonous wash of the liquid monster, on that calm night, conveyed to Mr. Hazel's mind a thought akin to David's.

"As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death."

Judge whether that thought grew weaker or stronger, when, after straining his eyes for some time, to understand what was going on at that midnight hour, in that

hidden place, he saw who was the workman, and what was his occupation. It was Joseph Wylie, the mate. His profile was illuminated by the candle, and looked ghastly. He had in his hands an auger of enormous size, and with this he was drilling a great hole through the ship's side, just below the water mark; an act, the effect of which would be to let the sea bodily into the ship, and sink her, with every soul on board, to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

"I was stupefied; and my hairs stood on end, and my tongue clove to my jaws."

Thus does one of Virgil's characters describe the effect his mind produced on his body, in a terrible situation.

Mr. Hazel had always ridiculed that trite line as a pure exaggeration; but he altered his opinion after that eventful night.

When he first saw what Wylie was doing — obstupuit; he was merely benumbed; but, as his mind realized the fiendish nature of the act, and its tremendous consequences, his hair actually bristled, and, for a few minutes at least, he could not utter a word.

In that interval of stupor, matters took another turn. The auger went in up to the haft: then Wylie caught up with his left hand a wooden plug he had got ready, jerked the auger away, caught up a hammer, and swiftly inserted the plug.

Rapid as he was, a single jet of water came squirting viciously in. But Wylie lost no time, he tapped the plug smartly with his hammer several times, and then, lifting a mallet with both hands, rained heavy blows on it that drove it in, and shook the ship's side.

Then Hazel found his voice, and he uttered an ejaculation that made the mate look round; he glared at the

man, who was glaring at him, and, staggering backward, trod on the light, and all was darkness and dead silence.

All but the wash of the sea outside, and that louder than ever.

CHAPTER IX.

But a short interval sufficed to restore one of the parties to his natural self-possession.

"Lord, sir," said Wylie, "how you startled me! You should not come upon a man at his work like that. We might have had an accident."

"What were you doing?" said Hazel, in a voice that quivered in spite of him.

"Repairing the ship. Found a crack or two in her inner skin. There, let me get a light, and I'll explain it to you, sir."

He groped his way out, and invited Mr. Hazel into his cabin. There he struck a light, and, with great civility, tendered an explanation. The ship, he said, had labored a good deal in the last gale, and he had discovered one or two flaws in her, which were of no immediate importance: but experience had taught him that in calm weather a ship ought to be kept tight. "As they say ashore, a stitch in time saves nine."

"But drilling holes in her is not the way," said Hazel, sternly.

The mate laughed. "Why, sir," said he, "what other way is there? We cannot stop an irregular crack; we can frame nothing to fit it. The way is to get ready a plug, measured a trifle larger than the aperture you are going to make; then drill a round hole, and force in the plug. I know no other way than that; and I was a ship's carpenter for ten years before I was a mate."

This explanation, and the manner in which it was given, removed Mr. Hazel's apprehensions for the time

being. "It was very alarming," said he; "but I suppose you know your business."

"Nobody better, sir," said Wylie. "Why, it is not one seaman in three that would trouble his head about a flaw in a ship's inner skin; but I'm a man that looks ahead. Will you have a glass of grog, sir, now you are here? I keep that under my eye, too: between ourselves, if the skipper had as much in his cabin, as I have here, that might be worse for us all than a crack or two in the ship's inner skin."

Mr. Hazel declined to drink grog at that time in the morning, but wished him good-night, and left him with a better opinion of him than he ever had till then.

Wylie, when he was gone, drew a tumbler of neat spirits, drank half, and carried the rest back to his work.

Yet Wylie was a very sober man in a general way. Rum was his tool; not his master.

When Hazel came to think of it all next day, he did not feel quite so easy as he had done. The inner skin! But, when Wylie withdrew his auger, the water had squirted in furiously. He felt it hard to believe that this keen jet of water could be caused by a small quantity that had found its way between the skin of the ship and her copper, or her top booting; it seemed rather to be due to the direct pressure of the liquid monster outside.

He went to the captain that afternoon, and first told him what he had seen, offering no solution. The captain, on that occasion, was in an amphibious state; neither wet nor dry; and his reply was altogether exceptional. He received the communication with pompous civility; then swore a great oath, and said he would put the mate in irons; "Confound the lubber! he will be through the ship's bottom."

"But, stop a moment," said Mr. Hazel, "it is only fair

you should also hear how he accounts for his proceeding."

The captain listened attentively to the explanation, and altered his tone. "Oh, that is a different matter," said he. "You need be under no alarm, sir; the thundering lubber knows what he is about at that work. Why, he has been a ship's carpenter all his life. Him a seaman! If anything ever happens to me, and Joe Wylie is set to navigate this ship, then you may say your prayers. He isn't fit to sail a wash-tub across a duck-pond. But I'll tell you what it is," added this worthy, with more pomposity than neatness of articulation, "here's a respeckable passenger brought me a report; do my duty m'employers, and — take a look at the well."

He accordingly chalked a plumb-line, and went and sounded the well.

There were eight inches of water. Hudson told him that was no more than all ships contained from various causes; "in fact," said he, "our pumps suck, and will not draw, at eight inches." Then suddenly grasping Mr. Hazel's hand, he said, in tearful accents, "Don't you trouble your head about Joe Wylie, or any such scum. I'm skipper of the Proserpine, and a man that does his duty to z'employers. Mr. Hazel, sir, I'd come to my last anchor in that well this moment, if my duty to m'employers required it. I'd lie down there this minute, and never move to all eternity, and a day after, if it was my duty to m'employers."

"No doubt," said Hazel, dryly. "But I think you can serve your employers better *in other parts of the ship*." He then left him, with a piece of advice; "to keep his eye upon that Wylie."

Mr. Hazel kept his own eye on Wylie so constantly, that at eleven o'clock P.M., he saw that worthy go into the captain's cabin with a quart bottle of rum.

The coast was clear; the temptation great; these men were still deceiving him with a feigned antagonism; he listened at the keyhole, not without some compunction; which, however, became less and less as fragments of the dialogue reached his ear.

For a long time the only speaker was Hudson, and his discourse ran upon his own exploits at sea. But suddenly Wylie's voice broke in with an unmistakable tone of superiority. "Belay all that chat, and listen to me. It is time we settled something. "I'll hear what you have got to say: and then you'll *do* what *I* say. Better keep your hands off the bottle a minute; you have had enough for the present; this is business. I know you are good for jaw; but what are you game to do for the governor's money? Anything?"

"More than you have ever seen or heard tell of, ye lubber," replied the irritated skipper. "Who has ever served his employers like Hiram Hudson?"

"Keep that song for your quarter deck," retorted the mate, contemptuously. "No; on second thoughts, just tell me how you have served your employers, you old humbug. Give me chapter and verse to choose from. Come now, the Neptune?"

"Well, the Neptune; she caught fire a hundred leagues from land. *Somebody* set a lighted candle on a gallon of turpentine. Well, I put her head before the wind, and ran for the Azores; and I stuck to her, sir, till she was as black as a coal, and we couldn't stand on deck, but kept hopping like parched peas; and fire belching out of her port-holes forward: then we took to the boats, and saved a few bales of silk by way of sample of her cargo, and got ashore; and she'd have come ashore too next tide and told tales; but somebody left a keg of gunpowder in the cabin, with a long fuse, and blew a hole in her old ribs, that the water came in, and down

she went, hissing like ten thousand serpents, and nobody the wiser."

"Who lighted the fuse, I wonder?" said Wylie.

"Didn't I tell ye it was *Somebody?*" said Hudson. "Hand me the stiff." He replenished his glass, and after taking a sip or two, asked Wylie if he had ever had the luck to be boarded by pirates.

"No," said Wylie. "Have you?"

"Ay; and they rescued me from a watery grave, as the lubbers call it. Ye see, I was employed by Downes and Co., down at the Havannah, and cleared for Vera Cruz with some boxes of old worn-out printers' type."

"To print psalm-books for the darkies, no doubt," suggested Wylie.

"Insured as specie," continued Hudson, ignoring the interruption. "Well, just at day-break one morning, all of a sudden there was a rakish-looking craft on our weather-bow: lets fly a nine-pounder across our fore-foot, and was alongside before my men could tumble up from below. I got knocked into the sea by the boom, and fell between the ships; and the pirate he got hold of me, and poured hot grog down my throat to bring me to my senses."

"That is not what you use it for in general," said Wylie. "Civil sort of pirate, though."

"Pirate be blowed. That was my consort, rigged out with a black flag, and mounted with four nine-pounders on one side, and five dummies on the other. He blustered a bit, and swore, and took our type and our cabbages (I complained to Downes ashore about the vagabond taking the vegetables), and ordered us to leeward under all canvas, and we never saw him again — not till he had shaved off his mustaches, and called on Downes to condole, and say the varmint had chased his ship fifty leagues out of her course; but he had got clear of him. Downes

complimented me publicly. Says he, 'This skipper boarded the pirate single-handed; only he jumped short, and fell between the two ships; and here he is by a miracle.' Then he takes out his handkerchief, and flops his head on my shoulder. 'His merciful preservation almost reconciles me to the loss of my gold,' says the thundering crocodile. Cleared seventy thousand dollars he did out of the Manhattan Marine, and gave the pirate and me but two hundred pounds between us both."

"The Rose?" said Wylie.

"What a hurry you are in! Pass the grog. Well, the Rose; she lay off Ushant. We canted her to wash the decks; lucky she had a careful commander; not like Kempenfelt, whose eye was in his pocket, and his fingers held the pen, so he went to the bottom, with Lord knows how many men. I noticed the squalls came very sudden; so I sent most of my men ashore, and got the boats ready in case of accident. A squall did strike her, and she was on her beam-ends in a moment: we pulled ashore with two bales of silk by way of salvage, and sample of what wasn't in her hold when she settled down. We landed; and the Frenchmen were dancing about with excitement. 'Captain,' says one, 'you have much sang fraw.' 'Insured, mounseer,' says I. 'Bone,' says he.

"Then there was the Antelope, lost in charge of a pilot off the Hooghly. I knew the water as well as he did. We were on the port tack, standing towards the shoal. Weather it, as we should have done next tack, and I should have failed in my duty to my employers. Anything but that. 'Look out!' said I. 'Pilot, she fore-reaches in stays.' Pilot was smoking: those Sandhead pilots smoke in bed and asleep. He takes his cigar out of his mouth for one moment. 'Ready about,' says he. 'Hands 'bout ship. Helm's a-lee. Raise tacks and sheets.' Round she was coming like a top. Pilot smok-

ing. Just as he was going to haul the mainsail, Somebody tripped against him, and shoved the hot cigar in his eye. He sung out and swore, and there was no mainsail haul. Ship in irons, tide running hard on to the shoal, and before we could clear away for anchoring, bump! — there she was hard and fast. A stiff breeze got up at sunrise, and she broke up. Next day I was sipping my grog and reading the 'Bengal Courier,' and it told the disastrous wreck of the brig Antelope, wrecked in charge of a pilot; 'but no lives lost, and the owners fully insured.' Then there was the bark Sally. Why, you saw her yourself distressed, on a lee shore."

"Yes," said Wylie. "I was in that tub, the Grampus, and we contrived to claw off the Scillies, yet you in your smart Sally got ashore. What luck!"

"Luck be blowed!" cried Hudson, angrily. "Somebody got into the chains to sound; and cut the lee halyards. Next tack the masts went over the side; and I had done my duty."

"Lives were lost that time, eh?" said Wylie, gravely.

"What is that to you?" replied Hudson, with the sudden ire of a drunken man. "Mind your own business. Pass the bottle.

"Yes, lives was lost: and always will be lost in seagoing ships, where the skipper does his duty. There was a sight more lost at Trafalgar, owing to *every* man doing his duty. Lives lost, ye lubber! And why not mine? Because their time was come, and mine wasn't. For I'll tell you one thing. Joe Wylie, — if she takes fire and runs before the wind till she is as black as a coal, and belching flame through all her port holes, and then explodes, and goes aloft in ten thousand pieces no bigger than my hat, or your knowledge of navigation, Hudson is the last man to leave her: Duty! — If she goes on her beam ends and founders, Hudson sees the

last of her, and reports it to his employers: Duty! — If she goes grinding on Scilly, Hudson is the last man to leave her bones: Duty! — Some day perhaps I shall be swamped myself along with the craft: I have escaped till now, all owing to not being insured; but if ever my time should come, and you should get clear, promise me, Joe, to see the owners, and tell 'em Hudson did his duty."

Here a few tears quenched his noble ardor for a moment. But he soon recovered, and said, with some little heat, "You have got the bottle again. I never saw such a fellow to get hold of the bottle. Come, here's 'Duty to our employers!' And now I'll tell you how we managed with the Carysbrook and the Amelia."

This promise was followed by fresh narratives: in particular, of a vessel he had run upon the Florida reef at night, where wreckers had been retained in advance to look out for signals, and come on board and quarrel in pretence and set fire to the vessel, insured at thrice her value.

Hudson got quite excited with the memory of these exploits, and told each successive feat louder and louder.

But now it was Wylie's turn. "Well," said he, gravely, "all this was child's play."

There was a pause that marked Hudson's astonishment. Then he broke out, "Child's play, ye lubber! If you had been there your gills would have been as white as your Sunday shirt."

"Come, be civil," said Wylie. "I tell you all the ways you have told me are too suspicious. Our governor is a highflyer; he pays like a prince, and, in return, he must not be blown on, if it is ever so little. 'Wylie,' says he, 'a breath of suspicion would kill me.' 'Make it so much,' says I, 'and that breath shall never blow on you.' No, no, skipper; none of those ways will do for us: they have all been worked twice too often. It must be done

in fair weather, and in a way — fill your glass, and I'll fill mine — capital rum this. You talk of my gills turning white; before long, we shall see whose keeps their color best, mine or yours, my Bo."

There was a silence, during which Hudson was probably asking himself what Wylie meant; for, presently, he broke out into a loud, but somewhat unsteady voice, "Why, you mad, drunken devil of a ship's carpenter, red-hot from hell, I see what you are at, now; you are going —"

"Hush!" cried Wylie, alarmed in his turn. "Is this the sort of thing to bellow out for the watch to hear? Whisper, now."

This was followed by the earnest mutterings of two voices. In vain did the listener send his very soul into his ear to hear. He could catch no single word. Yet he could tell, by the very tones of the speakers, that the dialogue was one of mystery and importance.

Here was a situation at once irritating and alarming; but there was no help for it. The best thing, now, seemed to be to withdraw unobserved, and wait for another opportunity. He did so: and he had not long retired, when the mate came out staggering, and flushed with liquor, and that was a thing that had never occurred before. He left the cabin door open, and went into his own room.

Soon after, sounds issued from the cabin, — peculiar sounds, something between grunting and snoring.

Mr. Hazel came and entered the cabin. There he found the captain of the Proserpine in a position very unfavorable to longevity. His legs were crooked over the seat of his chair, and his head was on the ground. His handkerchief was tight round his neck, and the man himself dead drunk, and purple in the face.

Mr. Hazel instantly undid his stock; on which the

gallant seaman muttered inarticulately. He then took his feet off the chair, and laid them on the ground, and put the empty bottle under the animal's neck. He gave the prostrate figure a heavy kick that almost turned it over, and the words, "Duty to m'employers," gurgled out of its mouth directly.

It really seemed as if these sounds were independent of the mind, and resided at the tip of Hudson's tongue; so that a thorough good kick could, at any time, shake them out of his inanimate body.

Thus do things ludicrous, and things terrible, mingle in the real world; only, to those who are in the arena, the ludicrous passes unnoticed, being overshadowed by its terrible neighbor.

And so it was with Hazel. He saw nothing absurd in all this; and in that prostrate, insensible hog, commanding the ship, forsooth, and carrying all their lives in his hands, he saw the mysterious and alarming only; saw them so, and felt them, that he lay awake all night thinking what he should do, and early next day he went into the mate's cabin, and said to him, "Mr. Wylie, in any other ship I should speak to the captain, and not to the mate; but here that would be no use, for you are the master, and he is your servant."

"Don't tell him so, sir, for he doesn't think small beer of himself."

"I shall waste no more words on him. It is to you I speak, and you know I speak the truth. Here is a ship, in which, for certain reasons known to yourself, the captain is under the mate."

"Well, sir," said Wylie good humoredly, "it is of no use trying to deceive a gentleman like you. Our skipper is an excellent seaman, but he has got a fault." Then Wylie imitated, with his hand, the action of a person filling his glass.

"And you are here to keep him sober, eh?"

Wylie nodded.

"Then why do you ply him with liquor?"

"I don't, sir."

"You do. I have seen you do it a dozen times: and last night you took rum into his room, and made him so drunk, he would have died where he lay if I had not loosed his handkerchief."

"I am sorry to hear that, sir; but he was sober when I left him. The fool must have got to the bottle the moment I was gone."

"But that bottle you put in his way; I saw you: and what was your object? to deaden his conscience with liquor, his and your own, while you made him your fiendish proposal. Man, man! do you believe in God, and in a judgment to come for the deeds done in the body, that you can plan in cold blood to destroy a vessel with nineteen souls on board, besides the live stock, the innocent animals that God pitied and spared when He raised His hand in wrath over Nineveh of old?"

While the clergyman was speaking, with flashing eyes and commanding voice, the seaman turned ashy pale; and drew his shoulders together like a cat preparing to defend her life.

"I plan to destroy a vessel, sir! You never heard me say such a word; and don't you hint such a thing in the ship, or you will get yourself into trouble."

"That depends on you."

"How so, sir?"

"I have long suspected you."

"You need not tell me that, sir."

"But I have not communicated my suspicions. And now that they are certainties, I come first to you. In one word, will you forego your intention, since it is found out?"

"How can I forego what never was in my head?" said Wylie. "Cast away the ship! Why, there's no land within three thousand miles. Founder a vessel in the Pacific! Do you think my life is not as sweet to me as yours is to you?"

Wylie eyed him keenly to see the effect of these words, and by a puzzled expression that came over his face, saw at once he had assumed a more exact knowledge than he really possessed.

Hazel replied that he had said nothing about foundering the ship; but there were many ways of destroying one. "For instance," said he, "I know how the Neptune was destroyed — and so do you; how the Rose and the Antelope were cast away — and so do you."

At this enumeration, Wylie lost his color and self-possession for a moment; he saw Hazel had been listening. Hazel followed up his blow. "Promise me now, by all you hold sacred, to forego this villany; and I hold my tongue. Attempt to defy me, or to throw dust in my eyes, and I go instantly among the crew, and denounce both you and Hudson to them."

"Good Heavens!" cried Wylie, in unfeigned terror. "Why, the men would mutiny on the spot."

"I can't help that," said Hazel firmly; and took a step towards the door.

"Stop a bit," said the mate, and, springing before the clergyman, he set his back against the door. "Don't be in such a nation hurry; for, if you do, it will be bad for me, but worse for you." The above was said so gravely, and with such evident sincerity, that Mr. Hazel was struck, and showed it. Wylie followed up that trifling advantage. "Sit down a minute, sir, if you please, and listen to me. You never saw a mutiny on board ship, I'll be bound. It is a worse thing than any gale that ever blew: begins fair enough, sometimes; but how does

it end? In breaking into the spirit-room, and drinking to madness, plundering the ship, ravishing the women, and cutting a throat or so for certain. You don't seem so fond of the picture, as you was of the idea. And then they might turn a deaf ear to you, after all. Ship is well found in all stores; provisions served out freely; men in good humor; and I have got their ear. And now I'll tell you why it won't suit your little game to blacken me to the crew, upon the bare chance of a mutiny." He paused for a moment, then resumed in a lower tone, "You see, sir, when a man is very ready to suspect me, I always suspect him. Now you was uncommon ready to suspect me. You didn't wait till you came on board; you began the game ashore. Oh! that makes you open one eye, does it? You thought I didn't know you again. Knew you, my man, the moment you came aboard. I never forget a face; and disguises don't pass on me."

It was now Hazel's turn to look anxious and discomposed.

"Well, then, the moment I saw you suspected me I was down upon you. You come aboard under false colors. We didn't want a chap like you in the ship; but you would come. 'What is the bloke after?' says I, and watches. You was so intent suspecting me of this, that and t'other, that you unguarded yourself: and that is common too. 'I'm blowed if it isn't the lady he is after,' says I. With all my heart: only she might do better, and I don't *see* how she could do worse, unless she went to Old Nick for a mate. Now, I'll tell you what it is, my Ticket o' Leave. I've been in trouble myself, and don't want to be hard on a poor devil, just because he sails under an alias, and lies as near the wind as he can, to weather on the beaks and the bobbies. But one good turn deserves another: keep your dirty sus-

picions to yourself; for if you dare to open your lips to the men, in five minutes, or less than that, you shall be in irons, and confined to your cabin; and we'll put you ashore at the first port that flies a British flag, and hand you over to the authorities, till one of Her Majesty's cruisers sends in a boat for you."

At this threat Mr. Hazel hung his head in confusion and dismay.

"Come, get out of my cabin, Parson Alias," shouted the mate; "and belay your foul tongue in this ship, and don't make an enemy of Joe Wylie, a man that can eat you up and spit you out again, and never brag. Sheer off, I say, and be d——d to you."

Mr. Hazel, with a pale face, and sick heart, looked aghast at this dangerous man, who could be fox, or tiger, as the occasion demanded.

Surprised, alarmed, outwitted, and out-menaced, he retired with disordered countenance and uneven steps, and hid himself in his own cabin.

The more he weighed the whole situation, the more clearly did he see that he was utterly powerless in the hands of Wylie. A skipper is an emperor; and Hudson had the power to iron him, and set him on shore at the nearest port. The right to do it was another matter; but even on that head, Wylie could furnish a plausible excuse for the act. Retribution, if it came at all, would not be severe, and would be three or four years coming: and who fears it much, when it is so dilatory, and so weak, and doubtful into the bargain?

He succumbed in silence for two days; and then, in spite of Wylie's threat, he made one timid attempt to approach the subject with Welch and Cooper, but a sailor came up instantly, and sent them forward to reef top-sails. And whenever he tried to enter into conversation with the pair, some sailor or other was sure to come up and listen.

Then he saw that he was spotted; or, as we say now-a-days, picketed.

He was at his wit's end.

He tried his last throw. He wrote a few lines to Miss Rolleston, requesting an interview. Aware of the difficulties he had to encounter here, he stilled his heart by main force, and wrote in terms carefully measured. He begged her to believe he had no design to intrude upon her, without absolute necessity, and for her own good. Respect for her own wishes forbade this, and also his self-respect.

"But," said he, "I have made a terrible discovery. The mate and the captain certainly intend to cast away this ship. No doubt they will try and not sacrifice their own lives and ours; but risk them they must, in the very nature of things. Before troubling you, I have tried all I could, in the way of persuasion and menace; but am defeated. So now it rests with you. You, alone, can save us all. I will tell you how, if you will restrain your repugnance, and accord me a short interview. Need I say that no other subject shall be introduced by me? In England, should we ever reach it, I may perhaps try to take measures to regain your good opinion; but here, I am aware, that is impossible; and I shall make no attempt in that direction, upon my honor."

To this there came a prompt and feminine reply.

The ship is Mr. Arthur Wardlaw's. The captain and the mate are able men appointed by him; I shall hand them your letter; and I request, sir, this may be your last communication of any kind with

HELEN ANNE ROLLESTON.

That night Wylie came to his cabin and laid on the table before him his letter to Miss Rolleston.

"Now, lookye here, mate," said the man, "what's to be the game between you and me? Has love for this gal druv you off your head? Take warning, and a last one, mind ye! If you stir your eye to cross my business, I blow the gaff. I'll introduce you to the lady under your true colors, and introduce your reverend ankles to the irons atween decks! What's got into ye?" hissed the mate, advancing his face close to Hazel's. And the rogue looked down the honest man's eye that quailed before him. When Hazel looked up, he was gone. The poor fellow gazed on the letter, which Helen had handed to the captain; he saw that resistance was useless; his eyes wandered about in despair; his arms hung listlessly by his sides. He was beaten.

His mental distress brought on an attack of that terrible malady, jaundice.

He crept about, yellow as a guinea; a very scarecrow.

He took no exercise; he ate little food. He lay, listless and dejected, about the deck.

The ship now encountered an adverse gale, and, for three whole days, was under close-reefed topsails; she was always a wet ship under stress of weather; and she took in a good deal of water on this occasion. On the fourth day it fell calm, and Captain Hudson, having examined the well, and found three feet of water, ordered the men to the pumps.

After working through one watch, the well was sounded again, and the water was so much reduced that the gangs were taken off; and the ship being now becalmed, and the weather lovely, the men were allowed to dance upon deck to the boatswain's fiddle.

While this pastime went on, the sun, large and red, reached the horizon, and diffused a roseate light over the entire ocean.

Not one of the current descriptions of heaven approach

the actual grandeur and beauty of the blue sky flecked with ruby and gold, and its liquid mirror that lay below, calm, dimpled, and glorified by that translucent, rosy tint.

While the eyes were yet charmed with this enchanting bridal of the sea and sky, and the ear amused with the merry fiddle and the nimble feet that tapped the sounding deck so deftly at every note, Cooper, who had been sounding the well, ran forward all of a sudden, and flung a thunderbolt in the midst.

"A Leak!"

CHAPTER X.

The fiddle ended in mid-tune, and the men crowded aft with anxious faces.

The captain sounded the well, and found three feet and a half water in it. He ordered all hands to the pumps.

They turned to with a good heart, and pumped, watch and watch, till daybreak.

Their exertions counteracted the leak, but did no more; the water in the well was neither more nor less perceptibly. This was a relief to their minds, so far; but the situation was a very serious one. Suppose foul weather should come, and the vessel ship water from above as well.

Now all those who were not on the pumps, set to work to find out the leak and stop it if possible. With candles in their hands, they crept about the ribs of the ship, narrowly inspecting every corner, and applying their ears to every suspected place, if haply they might hear the water coming in. The place where Hazel had found Wylie at work was examined, along with the rest; but neither there nor anywhere else could the leak be discovered. Yet the water was still coming in, and required unremitting labor to keep it under. It was then suggested by Wylie, and the opinion gradually gained ground, that some of the seams had opened in the late gale, and were letting in the water by small but numerous apertures.

Faces began to look cloudy; and Hazel, throwing off his lethargy, took his spell at the main pump with the rest.

When his gang was relieved he went away, bathed in perspiration, and, leaning over the well, sounded it.

While thus employed, the mate came behind him, with his cat-like step, and said, "See what has come on us with your forebodings! It is the unluckiest thing in the world to talk about losing a ship when she is at sea."

"You are a more dangerous man on board a ship than I am," was Hazel's prompt reply.

The well gave an increase of three inches.

Mr. Hazel now showed excellent qualities. He worked like a horse; and, finding the mate skulking, he reproached him before the men, and, stripping himself naked to the waist, invited him to do a man's duty. The mate, thus challenged, complied with a scowl.

They labored for their lives, and the quantity of water they discharged from the ship was astonishing; not less than a hundred and ten tons every hour.

They gained upon the leak — only two inches; but, in the struggle for life, this was an immense victory. It was the turn of the tide.

A light breeze sprung up from the southwest, and the captain ordered the men from the buckets to make all sail on the ship, the pumps still going.

When this was done, he altered the ship's course, and put her right before the wind, steering for the island of Juan Fernandez, which, though distant, was the nearest known land.

Probably it was the best thing he could do, in that awful waste of water. But its effect on the seamen was bad. It was like giving in. They got a little disheartened and flurried; and the cold, passionless water seized the advantage. It is possible, too, that the motion of the ship through the sea aided the leak.

The Proserpine glided through the water all night, like some terror-stricken creature, and the incessant pumps

seemed to be her poor heart beating loudly with breathless fear.

At daybreak she had gone a hundred and twenty miles. But this was balanced by a new and alarming feature. The water from the pumps no longer came up pure, but mixed with what appeared to be blood.

This got redder and redder, and struck terror into the more superstitious of the crew.

Even Cooper, whose heart was stout, leaned over the bulwarks, and eyed the red stream, gushing into the sea from the lee scuppers, and said aloud, "Ay, bleed to death, ye bitch! We shan't be long behind ye."

Hazel inquired, and found the ship had a quantity of dyewood amongst her cargo; he told the men this, and tried to keep up their hearts by his words and his example.

He succeeded with some: but others shook their heads. And by and by, even while he was working double tides, for them as well as for himself, ominous murmurs met his ear. "Parson aboard!" "Man aboard, with t'other world in his face!" And there were sinister glances to match.

He told this, with some alarm, to Welch and Cooper. They promised to stand by him; and Welch told him it was all the mate's doing; he had gone amongst the men, and poisoned them.

The wounded vessel, with her ever-beating heart, had run three hundred miles on the new tack. She had almost ceased to bleed; but what was as bad, or worse, small fragments of her cargo and stores came up with the water, and their miscellaneous character showed how deeply the sea had now penetrated.

This, and their great fatigue, began to demoralize the sailors. The pumps and buckets were still plied, but it was no longer with the uniform manner of brave and

hopeful men. Some stuck doggedly to their work, but others got flurried, and ran from one thing to another. Now and then a man would stop, and burst out crying; then to work again in a desperate way. One or two lost heart altogether, and had to be driven. Finally, one or two succumbed under the unremitting labor. Despair crept over others: their features began to change, so much so, that several countenances were hardly recognizable, and each, looking in the other's troubled face, saw his own fate pictured there.

Six feet water in the hold!

The captain, who had been sober beyond his time, now got dead drunk.

The mate took the command. On hearing this, Welch and Cooper left the pumps. Wylie ordered them back. They refused, and coolly lighted their pipes. A violent altercation took place, which was brought to a close by Welch.

"It is no use pumping the ship," said he. "She is doomed. D'ye think we are blind, my mate and me? You got the long-boat ready for yourself before ever the leak was sprung. Now get the cutter ready for my mate and me."

At these simple words Wylie lost color, and walked aft without a word.

Next day there were seven feet water in the hold, and quantities of bread coming up through the pumps.

Wylie ordered the men from the pumps to the boats. The long-boat was provisioned and lowered. While she was towing astern, the cutter was prepared, and the ship left to fill.

All this time Miss Rolleston had been kept in the dark, not as to the danger, but as to its extent. Great was her surprise when Mr. Hazel entered her cabin, and cast an ineffable look of pity on her.

She looked up surprised, and then angry. "How dare you?" she began.

He waved his hand in a sorrowful but commanding way. "Oh, this is no time for prejudice or temper. The ship is sinking: we are going into the boats. Pray make your preparations. Here is a list I have written of the things you ought to take: we may be weeks at sea, in an open boat."

Then, seeing her dumfounded, he caught up her carpet-bag, and threw her workbox into it for a beginning. He then laid hands upon some of her preserved meats, and marmalade, and carried them off to his own cabin.

His mind then flew back to his reading, and passed in rapid review all the wants that men had endured in open boats.

He got hold of Welch, and told him to be sure and see there was plenty of spare canvas on board, and sailing needles, scissors, etc.: also three bags of biscuit, and, above all, a cask of water.

He himself ran all about the ship, including the mate's cabin, in search of certain tools he thought would be wanted.

Then to his own cabin, to fill his carpet-bag.

There was little time to spare; the ship was low in the water, and the men abandoning her. He flung the things into his bag, fastened and locked it, strapped up his blankets for her use, flung on his pea-jacket, and ran across to the starboard side. There he found the captain lowering Miss Rolleston, with due care, into the cutter, and the young lady crying; not at being shipwrecked, but at being deserted by her maid. Jane Holt, at this trying moment, had deserted her mistress for her husband. This was natural; but, as is the rule with persons of that class, she had done it in the silliest and cruellest way. Had she given half-an-hour's notice of her inten-

tion, Donovan might have been on board the cutter with her and her mistress. But no; being a liar and a fool, she must hide her husband to the last moment, and then desert her mistress. The captain, then, was comforting Miss Rolleston, and telling her she should have her maid with her eventually, when Hazel came; he handed down his own bag, and threw the blankets into the stern-sheets; then went down himself, and sat on the midship thwart.

"Shove off," said the captain; and they fell astern.

But Cooper, with a boat-hook, hooked on to the long-boat; and the dying ship towed them both.

Five minutes more elapsed, and the captain did not come down, so Wylie hailed him.

There was no answer. Hudson had gone into the mate's cabin. Wylie waited a minute, then hailed again. "Hy! on deck there!"

"Hullo!" cried the captain, at last.

"Why didn't you come in the cutter?"

The captain crossed his arms, and leaned over the stern.

"Don't you know that Hiram Hudson is always the last to leave a sinking ship?"

"Well, you *are* the last," said Wylie. "So now come on board the long-boat at once. I dare not tow in her wake much longer, to be sucked in when she goes down."

"Come on board your craft, and desert my own?" said Hudson, disdainfully. "Know my duty to m'employers better."

These words alarmed the mate. "Curse it all!" he cried, "the fool has been and got some more rum. Fifty guineas to the man that will shin up the tow-rope, and throw that madman into the sea; then we can pick him up. He swims like a cork."

A sailor instantly darted forward to the rope. But,

unfortunately, Hudson heard this proposal, and it enraged him. He got to his cutlass. The sailor drew the boat under the ship's stern, but the drunken skipper flourished his cutlass furiously over his head. "Board me? ye pirates! the first that lays a finger on my bulwarks, off goes his hand at the wrist." Suiting the action to the word, he hacked at the tow-rope so vigorously that it gave way, and the boats fell astern.

Helen Rolleston uttered a shriek of dismay and pity. "Oh, save him!" she cried.

"Make sail!" cried Cooper; and, in a few seconds, they got all her canvas set upon the cutter.

It seemed a hopeless chase for these shells to sail after that dying monster with her cloud of canvas all drawing, alow and aloft.

But it did not prove so. The gentle breeze was an advantage to light craft, and the dying Proserpine was full of water, and could only crawl.

After a few moments of great anxiety, the boats crept up, the cutter on her port, and the long-boat on her starboard quarter.

Wylie ran forward, and, hailing Hudson, implored him, in the friendliest tones, to give himself a chance. Then tried him by his vanity, "Come, and command the boats, old fellow. How can we navigate them on the Pacific, without *you?*"

Hudson was now leaning over the taffrail utterly drunk. He made no reply to the mate, but merely waved his cutlass feebly in one hand, and his bottle in the other, and gurgled out, "Duty to m'employers."

Then Cooper, without a word, double reefed the cutter's mainsail, and ordered Welch to keep as close to the ship's quarter as he dare. Wylie instinctively did the same, and the three craft crawled on, in solemn and deadly silence, for nearly twenty minutes.

The wounded ship seemed to receive a death-blow. She stopped dead, and shook.

The next moment she pitched gently forward, and her bows went under the water, while her after-part rose into the air, and revealed to those in the cutter two splintered holes in her run, just below the water-line.

Welch started up and gripped Cooper by the shoulder; he pointed to the holes, from which the water was pouring in jets.

The next moment her stern settled down; the sea yawned horribly; the great waves of her own making rushed over her upper deck; and the lofty masts and sails, remaining erect, went down with sad majesty into the deep: and nothing remained but the bubbling and foaming of the voracious water, that had swallowed up the good ship and her cargo, and her drunken master.

All stood up in the boats, ready to save him. But the suction of the timber leviathan drew him down. He was seen no more in this world.

A loud sigh broke from every living bosom that witnessed that terrible catastrophe.

It was beyond words: and none were uttered, except by Cooper, who spoke so seldom; yet now three words of terrible import burst from him, and, uttered in his loud deep voice, rang like the sunk ship's knell over the still bubbling water, —

"SCUTTLED — BY GOD!"

CHAPTER XI.

"Hold your tongue," said Welch, with an oath.

Mr. Hazel looked at Miss Rolleston, and she at him. It was a momentary glance, and her eyes sank directly, and filled with patient tears. For the first few minutes after the Proserpine went down, the survivors sat benumbed, as if awaiting their turn to be ingulfed.

They seemed so little, and the Proserpine so big; yet she was swallowed before their eyes, like a crumb. They lost, for a few moments, all idea of escaping.

But, true it is, that, "while there's life there's hope:" and, as soon as their hearts began to beat again, their eyes roved round the horizon, and their elastic minds recoiled against despair.

This was rendered easier by the wonderful beauty of the weather. There were men there, who had got down from a sinking ship, into boats heaving and tossing against her side in a gale of wind, and yet been saved: and here all was calm and delightful. To be sure, in those other shipwrecks, land had been near, and their greatest peril was over when once the boats got clear of the distressed ship without capsizing. Here was no immediate peril; but certain death menaced them, at an uncertain distance.

Their situation was briefly this. Should it come on to blow a gale, these open boats, small and loaded, could not hope to live. Therefore they had two chances for life, and no more: they must either make land, — or be picked up at sea, — before the weather changed.

But how? The nearest known land was the group of

islands called Juan Fernandez, and they lay somewhere to leeward; but distant more than one thousand miles: and should they prefer the other chance, then they must beat three hundred miles and more, to windward; for Hudson, underrating the leak, as is supposed, had run the Proserpine fully that distance out of the track of trade.

Now the ocean is a highway — in law: but, in fact, it contains a few highways, and millions of byways; and once a cockle-shell gets into those byways, small indeed is its chance of being seen and picked up by any sea-going vessel.

Wylie, who was leading, lowered his sail, and hesitated between the two courses we have indicated. However, on the cutter coming up with him, he ordered Cooper to keep her head north-east, and so run all night. He then made all the sail he could in the same direction, and soon outsailed the cutter. When the sun went down, he was about a mile ahead of her.

Just before sunset, Mr. Hazel made a discovery that annoyed him very much. He found that Welch had put only one bag of biscuit, a ham, a keg of spirit, and a small barrel of water, on board the cutter.

He remonstrated with him sharply. Welch replied that it was all right; the cutter being small, he had put the rest of her provisions on board the long-boat.

"On board the long-boat!" said Hazel, with a look of wonder. "You have actually made our lives depend upon that scoundrel Wylie again. You deserve to be flung into the sea. You have no forethought yourself: yet you will not be guided by those that have it."

Welch hung his head a little at these reprcaches. However, he replied, rather sullenly, that it was only for one night; they could signal the long-boat in the morning, and get the other bags, and the cask, out of her.

But Mr. Hazel was not to be appeased. "The morning! Why, she sails three feet to our two. How do you know he won't run away from us? I never expect to get within ten miles of him again. We know him; and he knows we know him."

Cooper got up, and patted Mr. Hazel on the shoulder soothingly. "Boat-hook aft," said he to Welch.

He then, by an ingenious use of the boat-hook, and some of the spare canvas, contrived to set out a studding-sail on the other side of the mast.

Hazel thanked him warmly. "But, oh, Cooper! Cooper!" said he, "I'd give all I have in the world if that bread and water were on board the cutter instead of the long-boat."

The cutter had now two wings, instead of one; the water bubbling loud under her bows marked her increased speed, and all fear of being greatly outsailed by her consort began to subside.

A slight sea-fret came on, and obscured the sea in part; but they had a good lantern and compass, and steered the course exactly, all night, according to Wylie's orders, changing the helmsman every four hours.

Mr. Hazel, without a word, put a rug round Miss Rolleston's shoulders, and another round her feet.

"Oh, not both, sir, please," said she.

"Am I to be disobeyed by everybody?" said he.

Then she submitted in silence, and in a certain obsequious way that was quite new, and well calculated to disarm anger.

Sooner or later, all slept, except the helmsman.

At daybreak, Mr. Hazel was wakened by a loud hail from a man in the bows.

All the sleepers started up.

"Long-boat not in sight!"

It was too true. The ocean was blank: not a sail, large or small, in sight.

Many voices spoke at once.

"He has carried on till he has capsized her."

"He has given us the slip."

Unwilling to believe so great a calamity, every eye peered and stared all over the sea. In vain. Not a streak that could be a boat's hull, not a speck that could be a sail.

The little cutter was alone upon the ocean. Alone, with scarcely two days' provisions, one thousand miles from land, and four hundred miles to leeward of the nearest sea-road.

Hazel, seeing his worst forebodings realized, sat down in moody, bitter, and boding silence.

Of the other men some raged, and cursed. Some wept aloud.

The lady, more patient, put her hands together, and prayed to Him who made the sea, and all that therein is. Yet her case was the cruellest. For she was by nature more timid than the men, yet she must share their desperate peril. And then to be alone with all these men, and one of them had told her he loved her! Shame tortured this delicate creature, as well as fear. Happy for her, that of late, and only of late, she had learned to pray in earnest. "Qui precari novit, premi potest, non potest opprimi."

It was now a race between starvation and drowning, and either way death stared them in the face.

CHAPTER XII.

The long-boat was, at this moment, a hundred miles to windward of the cutter.

The fact is, that Wylie, the evening before, had been secretly perplexed as to the best course. He had decided to run for the island; but he was not easy under his own decision; and, at night, he got more and more discontented with it. Finally, at nine o'clock P.M., he suddenly gave the order to luff, and tack; and by daybreak he was very near the place where the Proserpine went down: whereas the cutter, having run before the wind all night, was, at least, a hundred miles to leeward of him.

Not to deceive the reader, or let him, for a moment, think we do business in monsters, we will weigh this act of Wylie's justly.

It was a piece of iron egotism. He preferred, for himself, the chance of being picked up by a vessel. He thought it was about a hair's-breadth better than running for an island, as to whose bearing he was not very clear, after all.

But he was not *sure* he was taking the best or safest course. The cutter might be saved, after all, and the long-boat lost.

Meantime he was not sorry of an excuse to shake off the cutter. She contained one man at least who knew he had scuttled the Proserpine; and therefore it was all important to him to get to London before her, and receive the two thousand pounds which was to be his reward for that abominable act.

But the way to get to London before Mr. Hazel, or

else to the bottom of the Pacific before him, was to get back into the sea-road at all hazards.

He was not aware that the cutter's water and biscuit were on board his boat; nor did he discover this till noon next day. And on making this fearful discovery, he showed himself human: he cried out with an oath, "What have I done? I have damned myself to all eternity!"

He then ordered the boat to be put before the wind again; but the men scowled, and not one stirred a finger; and he saw the futility of this, and did not persist, but groaned aloud: and then sat, staring wildly: finally, like a true sailor, he got to the rum, and stupefied his agitated conscience for a time.

While he lay drunk, at the bottom of the boat, his sailors carried out his first instructions, beating southward right in the wind's eye.

Five days they beat to windward, and never saw a sail. Then it fell dead calm; and so remained for three days more.

The men began to suffer greatly from cramps, owing to their number and confined position. During the calm, they rowed all day, and with this, and a light westerly breeze that sprung up, they got into the sea-road again: but having now sailed three hundred and fifty miles to the southward, they found a great change in the temperature: the nights were so cold they were fain to huddle together, to keep a little warmth in their bodies.

On the fifteenth day of their voyage it began to rain and blow, and then they were never a whole minute out of peril. Hand forever on the sheet, eye on the waves, to ease her at the right moment: and, with all this care, the spray eternally flying half way over her mast, and often a body of water making a clean breach over her,

and the men baling night and day with their very hats, or she could not have lived an hour.

At last, when they were almost dead with wet, cold, fatigue, and danger, a ship came in sight, and crept slowly up, about two miles to windward of the distressed boat. With the heave of the waters they could see little more than her sails; but they ran up a bright bandanna handkerchief to their masthead; and the ship made them out. She hoisted Dutch colors, and — continued her course.

Then the poor abandoned creatures wept, and raved, and cursed, in their frenzy, glaring after that cruel, shameless man, who could do such an act, yet hoist a color, and show of what nation he was the native — and the disgrace.

But one of them said not a word. This was Wylie. He sat shivering, and remembered how he had abandoned the cutter, and all on board. Loud sighs broke from his laboring breast; but not a word. Yet one word was ever present to his mind; and seemed written in fire on the night of clouds, and howled in his ears by the wind — Retribution!

And now came a dirty night — to men in ships; a fearful night to men in boats. The sky black, the sea on fire with crested billows, that broke over them every minute; their light was washed out; their provisions drenched and spoiled: bale as they would, the boat was always filling. Up to their knees in water; cold as ice, blinded with spray, deafened with roaring billows, they tossed and tumbled in a fiery foaming hell of waters, and still, though despairing, clung to their lives, and baled with their hats unceasingly.

Day broke, and the first sight it revealed to them was a brig to windward staggering along, and pitching under close-reefed topsails.

They started up, and waved their hats, and cried aloud. But the wind carried their voices to leeward, and the brig staggered on.

They ran up their little signal of distress; but still the vessel staggered on.

Then the miserable men shook hands all round, and gave themselves up for lost.

But, at this moment, the brig hoisted a vivid flag all stripes and stars, and altered her course a point or two.

She crossed the boat's track a mile ahead, and her people looked over the bulwarks, and waved their hats to encourage those tossed and desperate men.

Having thus given them the weather gage, she hove-to for them.

They ran down to her, and crept under her lee; down came ropes to them, held by friendly hands, and friendly faces shone down at them: eager grasps seized each as he went up the ship's side, and so, in a very short time, they sent the woman up, and the rest being all sailors, and clever as cats, they were safe on board the whaling brig Maria, Captain Slocum, of Nantucket, U. S.

Their log, compass, and instruments were also saved.

The boat was cast adrift, and was soon after seen bottom upwards on the crest of a wave.

The good Samaritan in command of the Maria supplied them with dry clothes out of the ship's stores, good food, and medical attendance, which was much needed, their legs and feet being in a deplorable condition, and their own surgeon crippled.

A south-easterly gale induced the American skipper to give Cape Horn a wide berth, and the Maria soon found herself three degrées south of that perilous coast. There she encountered field-ice. In this labyrinth they dodged and worried for eighteen days, until a sudden chop in the wind gave the captain a chance of which he

promptly availed himself, and in forty hours sighted Terra del Fuego.

During this time, the rescued crew, having recovered from the effects of their hardships, fell in to the work of the ship, and took their turns with the Yankee seamen. The brig was short-handed; but trimmed and handled by a full crew, — and the Proserpine's men, who were first-class seamen, worked with a will because work was no longer a duty, — she exhibited a speed the captain had almost forgotten was in the craft. Now speed at sea means economy, for every day added to a voyage is so much off the profits. Slocum was part owner of the boat, and shrewdly alive to the value of the seamen. When about three hundred miles south of Buenos Ayres, Wylie proposed that they should be landed there, from whence they might be transhipped to a vessel bound for home. This was objected to by Slocum, on the ground that by such a deviation from his course he must lose three days, and the port dues at Buenos Ayres were heavy.

Wylie undertook that the house of Wardlaw and Son should indemnify the brig for all expenses and losses incurred.

Still the American hesitated; at last he honestly told Wylie he wished to keep the men; he liked them, they liked him. He had sounded them, and they had no objection to join his ship, and sign articles for a three years' whaling voyage, provided they did not thereby forfeit the wages to which they would be entitled on reaching Liverpool. Wylie went forward and asked the men if they would take service with the Yankee captain. All but three expressed their desire to do so; these three had families in England, and refused. The mate gave the others a release, and an order on Wardlaw and Co. for their full wages for the voyage; then they signed

articles with Captain Slocum, and entered the American Mercantile Navy.

Two days after this they sighted the high lands at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata at ten P.M., and lay-to for a pilot. After three hours' delay they were boarded by a pilot-boat, and then began to creep into the port. The night was very dark, and a thin white fog lay on the water.

Wylie was sitting on the taffrail, and conversing with Slocum, when the look-out forward sung out, "Sail ho!"

Another voice almost simultaneously yelled out of the fog, "Port your helm!"

Suddenly, out of the mist, and close aboard the Maria, appeared the hull and canvas of a very large ship. The brig was crossing her course, and the ship's great bowsprit barely missed the brig's mainsail. It stood for a moment over Wylie's head. He looked up, and there was the figure-head of the ship looming almost within his reach. It was a colossal green woman; one arm extended grasped a golden harp, the other was pressed to her head in the attitude of holding back her wild and flowing hair. The face seemed to glare down upon the two men: in another moment the monster, gliding on, just missing the brig, was lost in the fog.

"That was a narrow squeak," said Slocum.

Wylie made no answer, but looked into the darkness after the vessel.

He had recognized her figure-head.

It was the Shannon.

CHAPTER XIII.

Before the Maria sailed again with the men who formed a part of Wylie's crew, he made them sign a declaration before the English Consul at Buenos Ayres. This document set forth the manner in which the Proserpine foundered; it was artfully made up of facts, enough to deceive a careless listener; but when Wylie read it over to them, he slurred over certain parts, which he took care, also, to express in language above the comprehension of such men. Of course, they assented eagerly to what they did not understand, and signed the statement conscientiously.

So Wylie and his three men were shipped on board the Boadicea, bound for Liverpool, in Old England, while the others sailed with Captain Slocum, for Nantucket, in New England.

The Boadicea was a clipper, laden with hides and a miscellaneous cargo. For seventeen days she flew before a southerly gale, being on her best sailing point, and after one of the shortest passages she had ever made, she lay-to outside the bar, off the Mersey. It wanted but one hour to daylight, the tide was flowing; the pilot sprang aboard.

"What do you draw?" he asked of the master.

"Fifteen feet, barely," was the reply.

"That will do," and the vessel's head was laid for the river.

They passed a large barque, with her top-sails backed.

"Ay," remarked the pilot, "she has waited since the half-ebb; there ain't more than four hours in the twenty-four that such craft as that can get in."

"What is she? An American liner?" asked Wylie, peering through the gloom.

"No," said the pilot; "she's an Australian ship. The Shannon, from Sydney."

The mate started, looked at the man, then at the vessel. Twice the Shannon had thus met him, as if to satisfy him that his object had been attained, and each time she seemed to him not an inanimate thing, but a silent accomplice. A chill of fear struck through the man's frame as he looked at her. Yes, there she lay, and in her hold were safely stowed a hundred and sixty thousand pounds in gold, marked lead and copper.

Wylie had no luggage nor effects to detain him on board; he landed, and having bestowed his three companions in a sailors' boarding-house, he was hastening to the shipping agents of Wardlaw and Son to announce his arrival and the fate of the Proserpine. He had reached their offices in Water Street before he recollected that it was barely half-past five o'clock, and though broad daylight on that July morning, merchants' offices are not open at that hour. The sight of the Shannon had so bewildered him that he had not noticed that the shops were all shut, the streets deserted. Then a thought occurred to him — why not be the bearer of his own news? He did not require to turn the idea twice over, but resolved for many reasons to adopt it. As he hurried to the railway station, he tried to recollect the hour at which the early train started; but his confused and excited mind refused to perform this function of memory. The Shannon dazed him.

At the railway-station he found that a train had started at four A.M., and there was nothing until seven-thirty. This check sobered him a little, and he went back to the docks: he walked out to the further end of that noble line of berths, and sat down on the verge with his legs

dangling over the water. He waited an hour: it was six o'clock by the great dial at St. George's Dock. His eyes were fixed on the Shannon, which was moving slowly up the river; she came abreast to where he sat. The few sails requisite to give her steerage, fell. Her anchor-chain rattled, and she swung round with the tide. The clock struck the half-hour: a boat left the side of the vessel, and made straight for the steps near where he was seated. A tall, noble looking man sat in the stern sheets, beside the coxswain; he was put ashore, and, after exchanging a few words with the boat's crew, he mounted the steps which led him to Wylie's side, followed by one of the sailors, who carried a portmanteau.

He stood for a single moment on the quay, and stamped his foot on the broad stones; then heaving a deep sigh of satisfaction, he murmured, — "Thank God!"

He turned towards Wylie.

"Can you tell me, my man, at what hour the first train starts for London?"

"There is a slow train at seven-thirty, and an express at nine."

"The express will serve me, and give me time for breakfast at the Adelphi. Thank you — good morning;" and the gentleman passed on, followed by the sailor.

Wylie looked after him; he noted that erect military carriage, and crisp, gray hair, and thick white mustache: he had a vague idea that he had seen that face before, and the memory troubled him.

At seven-thirty Wylie started for London; the military man followed him in the express at nine, and caught him up at Watford; together they arrived at the station at Euston Square; it wanted a quarter to three. Wylie hailed a cab, but, before he could struggle through the crowd to reach it, a railway porter threw a portmanteau

on its roof, and his military acquaintance took possession of it.

"All right," said the porter. "What address, sir?"

Wylie did not hear what the gentleman said, but the porter shouted it to the cabman, and then he did hear it.

"No. —, Russell Square."

It was the house of Arthur Wardlaw!

Wylie took off his hat, rubbed his frouzy hair, and gaped after the cab.

He entered another cab and told the driver to go to "No. —, Fenchurch Street."

It was the office of Wardlaw and Son.

CHAPTER XIV.

Our scene now changes from the wild ocean and its perils, to a snug room in Fenchurch Street; the inner office of Wardlaw and Son: a large apartment, panelled with fine old mellow Spanish oak; and all the furniture in keeping: the carpet, a thick Axminster of sober colors; the chairs, of oak and morocco, very substantial; a large office table, with oaken legs like very columns, substantial; two Milner safes; a globe of unusual size, with a handsome tent over it, made of roan leather, figured; the walls hung with long oak boxes, about eight inches broad, containing rolled maps of high quality, and great dimensions; to consult which, oaken sceptres tipped with brass hooks stood ready: with these, the great maps could be drawn down and inspected; and, on being released, flew up into their wooden boxes again. Besides these were hung up a few drawings, representing outlines, and inner sections, of vessels: and on a smaller table, lay models, almanacs, etc. The great office-table was covered with writing materials and papers, all but a square space enclosed with a little silver rail, and inside that space lay a purple morocco case about ten inches square: it was locked, and contained an exquisite portrait of Helen Rolleston.

This apartment was so situated, and the frames of the plate glass windows so well made and substantial, that, let a storm blow a thousand ships ashore, it could not be felt, nor heard, in Wardlaw's inner office.

But appearances are deceitful; and who can wall out a sea of troubles, and the tempests of the mind?

The inmate of that office was battling for his commercial existence, under accumulated difficulties and dangers. Like those who sailed the Proserpine's longboat upon that dirty night, which so nearly swamped her, his eye had now to be on every wave, and the sheet forever in his hand.

His measures had been ably taken; but, as will happen when clever men are driven into a corner, he had backed events rather too freely against time; had allowed too slight a margin for unforeseen delays. For instance, he had averaged the Shannon's previous performances, and had calculated on her arrival too nicely. She was a fortnight overdue, and that delay brought peril.

He had also counted upon getting news of the Proserpine. But not a word had reached Lloyds' as yet.

At this very crisis came the panic of '66. Overend and Gurney broke; and Wardlaw's experience led him to fear that, sooner or later, there would be a run on every bank in London. Now he had borrowed eighty thousand pounds at one bank, and thirty-five thousand pounds at another: and, without his ships, could not possibly pay a quarter of the money. If the banks in question were run upon, and obliged to call in all their resources, his credit must go; and this, in his precarious position, was ruin.

He had concealed his whole condition from his father, by false book-keeping. Indeed, he had only two confidants in the world; poor old Michael Penfold, and Helen Rolleston's portrait; and even to these two he made half confidences. He dared not tell either of them all he had done, and all he was going to do.

His redeeming feature was as bright as ever. He still loved Helen Rolleston with a chaste, constant, and ardent affection, that did him honor. He loved money

too well: but he loved Helen better. In all his troubles and worries, it was his one consolation, to unlock her portrait, and gaze on it, and purify his soul for a few minutes. Sometimes he would apologize to it, for an act of doubtful morality. "How can I risk the loss of you?" was his favorite excuse. No: he must have credit. He must have money. She must not suffer by his past imprudences. They must be repaired, at any cost — for her sake.

It was ten o'clock in the morning: Mr. Penfold was sorting the letters for his employer, when a buxom young woman rushed into the outer office, crying "Oh, Mr. Penfolds!" and sank into a chair breathless.

"Dear heart! what is the matter now? said the old gentleman.

"I have had a dream, sir: I dreamed I saw Joe Wylie out on the seas, in a boat; and the wind it was a-blowing and the sea a-roaring to that degree as Joe looked at me, and says he, 'Pray for me, Nancy Rouse.'

"So I says, 'Oh dear, Joe, what is the matter? and whatever is become of the Proserpines?'

"Says he again, 'Pray for me, Nancy Rouse!' With that, I tries to pray in my dream, and screams instead, and wakes myself. O Mr. Penfolds, do tell me, have you got any news of the Proserpines this morning?"

"What is that to you?" inquired Arthur Wardlaw, who had entered just in time to hear this last query.

"What is it to me!" cried Nancy, firing up; "it is more to me, perhaps, than it is to you, for that matter."

Penfold explained timidly, "Sir, Mrs. Rouse is my landlady."

"Which I have never been to church with any man yet of the name of Rouse, leastways, not in my waking hours," edged in the lady.

"Miss Rouse, I should say," said Penfold, apologizing. "I beg pardon, but I thought Mrs. might sound better in a landlady. Please, sir, Mr. Wylie the mate of the Proserpine is her — her — sweetheart."

"Not he. Leastways, he is only on trial, after a manner."

"Of course, sir — only after a manner," added Penfold, sadly perplexed. "Miss Rouse is incapable of anything else. But, if you please, m'm, I don't presume to know the exact relation:" — and then with great reserve — "but, you know you are anxious about him."

Miss Rouse sniffed, and threw her nose in the air — as if to throw a doubt even on that view of the matter.

"Well, madam," said Wardlaw, "I am sorry to say I can give you no information. I share your anxiety, for I have got a hundred and sixty thousand pounds of gold in the ship. You might inquire at Lloyds'. Direct her there, Mr. Penfold, and bring me my letters."

With this he entered his inner office, sat down, took out a golden key, opened the portrait of Helen, gazed at it, kissed it, uttered a deep sigh, and prepared to face the troubles of the day.

Penfold brought in a leathern case, like an enormous bill-book: it had thirty vertical compartments: and the names of various cities and sea-ports, with which Wardlaw and Son did business, were printed in gold letters on some of these compartments; on others, the names of persons; and on two compartments, the word "Miscellaneous." Michael brought this machine in, filled with a correspondence, enough to break a man's heart to look at.

This was one of the consequences of Wardlaw's position. He durst not let his correspondence be read, and filtered, in the outer office: he opened the whole mass; sent some back into the outer office: then touched a

hand-bell, and a man emerged from the small apartment adjoining his own. This was Mr. Atkins, his short-hand writer. He dictated to this man some twenty letters, which were taken down in short-hand; the man retired to copy them, and write them out in duplicate from his own notes, and this reduced the number to seven: these Wardlaw sat down to write, himself, and lock up the copies.

While he was writing them, he received a visitor or two, whom he despatched as quickly as his letters.

He was writing his last letter, when he heard in the outer office a voice he thought he knew. He got up and listened. It was so. Of all the voices in the city, this was the one it most dismayed him to hear, in his office, at the present crisis.

He listened on, and satisfied himself that a fatal blow was coming. He then walked quietly to his table, seated himself, and prepared to receive the stroke with external composure.

Penfold announced, "Mr. Burtenshaw."

"Show him in," said Wardlaw quietly.

Mr. Burtenshaw, one of the managers of Morland's bank, came in, and Wardlaw motioned him courteously to a chair, while he finished his letter, which took only a few moments.

While he was sealing it, he half turned to his visitor, and said, "No bad news? Morland's is safe, of course."

"Well," said Burtenshaw, "we could not hope to escape the effects of the panic. There is a run upon our bank — a severe one."

He then, after an uneasy pause, and with apparent reluctance, added, "I am requested by the other directors to assure you it is their present extremity alone, that — in short, we are really compelled to beg you to repay the amount advanced to you by the bank."

Wardlaw showed no alarm, but great surprise. This was clever; for he felt great alarm, and no surprise.

"The eighty thousand pounds," said he. "Why, that advance was upon the freight of the Proserpine. Forty-five thousand ounces of gold. She ought to be here by this time. She is in the Channel at this moment, no doubt."

"Excuse me; she is overdue, and the underwriters uneasy. I have made inquiries."

"At any rate, she is fully insured, and you hold the policies. Besides, the name of Wardlaw on your books should stand for bullion."

Burtenshaw shook his head. "Names are at a discount to-day, sir. We can't pay them across our counter. Why, our depositors look cross at Bank of England notes."

To an inquiry, half ironical, whether the managers really expected him to find eighty thousand pounds cash, at a few hours' notice, Burtenshaw replied, sorrowfully, that they felt for his difficulty whilst deploring their own; but that, after all, it was a debt: and, in short, if he could find no means of paying it they must suspend payment for a time, and issue a statement — and —

He hesitated to complete his sentence, and Wardlaw did it for him. "And ascribe your suspension to my inability to refund this advance?" said he bitterly.

"I am afraid that is the construction it will bear."

Wardlaw rose, to intimate he had no more to say.

Burtenshaw, however, was not disposed to go without some clear understanding. "May I say we shall hear from you, sir?"

"Yes."

And so they wished each other good-morning; and Wardlaw sank into his chair.

In that quiet dialogue, ruin had been inflicted and received without any apparent agitation; ay, and worse than ruin — exposure.

Morland's suspension, on account of money lost by Wardlaw and Son, would at once bring old Wardlaw to London, and the affairs of the firm would be investigated, and the son's false system of bookkeeping be discovered.

He sat stupefied awhile, then put on his hat, and rushed to his solicitor; on the way, he fell in with a great talker, who told him there was a rumor the Shannon was lost in the Pacific.

At this he nearly fainted in the street; and his friend took him back to his office in a deplorable condition. All this time he had been feigning anxiety about the Proserpine, and concealing his real anxiety about the Shannon. To do him justice, he lost sight of everything in the world now but Helen. He sent old Penfold in hot haste to Lloyds', to inquire for news of the ship; and then he sat down sick at heart; and all he could do now was to open her portrait, and gaze at it through eyes blinded with tears. Even a vague rumor, which he hoped might be false, had driven all his commercial manœuvres out of him, and made all other calamities seem small.

And so they all are small, compared with the death of the creature we love.

While he sat thus in a stupor of fear and grief, he heard a well-known voice in the outer office; and, next after Burtenshaw's, it was the one that caused him the most apprehension. It was his father's.

Wardlaw senior rarely visited the office now; and this was not his hour. So Arthur knew something extraordinary had brought him up to town. And he could not doubt that it was the panic, and that he had been to Morland's, or would go there in the course of the day; but, indeed, it was more probable that he had already heard something, and was come to investigate.

Wardlaw senior entered the room.

"Good-morning, Arthur," said he. "I've got good news for you."

Arthur was quite startled by an announcement that accorded so little with his expectations.

"Good news — for *me?*" said he, in a faint, incredulous tone.

"Ay, glorious news! Haven't you been anxious about the Shannon? I have; more anxious than I would own."

Arthur started up. "The Shannon! God bless you, father."

"She lies at anchor in the Mersey," roared the old man, with all a father's pride at bringing such good news. "Why, the Rollestons will be in London at two-thirty. See, here is his telegram."

There was hearty shaking of hands, and Arthur Wardlaw was the happiest man in London.

"Got the telegram at Elmtrees, this morning, and came up by the first express."

The telegram was from Sir Edward Rolleston, "*Reached Liverpool last night, will be at Euston, two-thirty.*"

"Not a word from *her!*" said Arthur.

"Oh, there was no time to write; and ladies do not use the telegram." He added slyly, "Perhaps she thought coming in person would do as well, or better, eh?"

"But why does he telegraph you instead of me?"

"I am sure I don't know. What does it matter? Yes, I do know. It is settled he and Helen are to come to me at Elmtrees, so I was the proper person to telegraph. I'll go and meet them at the station; there is plenty of time. But, I say, Arthur, have you seen the papers? Bartley Brothers obliged to wind up. Maple and Cox of Liverpool gone, — Atlantic trading. Terry and Brown suspended, — international credit gone. Old friends some

of these. Hopley and Timms, railway contractors, failed, sir; liabilities, seven hundred thousand pounds and more."

"Yes, sir," said Arthur pompously; "1866 will long be remembered for its revelations of commercial morality."

The old gentleman, on this, asked his son, with excusable vanity, whether he had done ill in steering clear of speculation; he then congratulated him on having listened to good advice, and stuck to legitimate business. "I must say, Arthur," added he, "your books are models for any trading firm."

Arthur winced in secret under this praise, for it occurred to him, that in a few days his father would discover those books were all a sham, and the accounts a fabrication.

However, the unpleasant topic was soon interrupted, and effectually, too; for Michael looked in with an air of satisfaction on his benevolent countenance, and said, "Gentlemen, such an arrival! Here is Nancy Rouse's sweetheart that she dreamed was drowned."

"What is the man to me?" said Arthur peevishly. He did not recognize Wylie under that title.

"La, Mr. Arthur! why, he is the mate of the Proserpine," said Penfold.

"What! Wylie! Joseph Wylie?" cried Arthur in a sudden excitement that contrasted strangely with his previous indifference.

"What is that?" cried Wardlaw senior; "the Proserpine! Show him in at once."

Now this caused Arthur Wardlaw considerable anxiety; for obvious reasons, he did not want his father and this sailor to exchange a word together. However, that was inevitable now: the door opened, and the bronzed face and sturdy figure of Wylie, clad in a rough pea-jacket, came slouching in.

Arthur went hastily to meet him, and gave him an

expressive look of warning, even while he welcomed him in cordial accents.

"Glad to see you safe home," said Wardlaw senior.

"Thank ye, guv'nor," said Wylie. "Had a squeak for it, this time."

"Where is your ship?"

Wylie shook his head sorrowfully. "Bottom of the Pacific."

"Good heavens! What! is she lost?"

"That she is, sir: foundered at sea, twelve hundred miles from the Horn, and more."

"And the freight? the gold?" put in Arthur, with well-feigned anxiety.

"Not an ounce saved," said Wylie, disconsolately. "A hundred and sixty thousand pounds gone to the bottom."

"Good heavens!"

"Ye see, sir," said Wylie, "the ship encountered one gale after another, and labored a good deal, first and last; and we all say her seams must have opened; for we never could find the leak that sunk her," and he cast a meaning glance at Arthur Wardlaw.

"No matter how it happened," said the old merchant: "are we insured to the full? that is the first question."

"To the last shilling."

"Well done, Arthur."

"But, still, it is most unlucky. Some weeks must elapse before the insurances can be realized, and a portion of the gold was paid for in bills at short date."

"The rest in cash?"

"Cash and merchandise."

"Then there is the proper margin. Draw on my private account, at the Bank of England."

These few simple words showed the struggling young merchant a way out of all his difficulties.

His heart leaped so, he dared not reply, lest he should excite the old gentleman's suspicions.

But, ere he had well drawn his breath for joy, came a freezer.

"Mr. Burtenshaw, sir."

"Bid him wait," said Arthur aloud, and cast a look of great anxiety on Penfold, which the poor old man, with all his simplicity, comprehended well enough.

"Burtenshaw, from Morland's. What does he want of us?" said Wardlaw senior, knitting his brows.

Arthur turned cold all over. "Perhaps to ask me not to draw out my balance. It is less than usual: but they are run upon; and, as you are good enough to let me draw on you — by the by, perhaps you will sign a check before you go to the station."

"How much do you want?"

"I really don't know, till I have consulted Penfold: the gold was a large and advantageous purchase, sir."

"No doubt; no doubt. I'll give you my signature; and you can fill in the amount."

He drew a check in favor of Arthur Wardlaw, signed it, and left him to fill in the figures.

He then looked at his watch, and remarked they would only just have time to get to the station.

"Good heavens!" cried Arthur; "and I can't go. I must learn the particulars of the loss of the Proserpine, and prepare the statement at once for the underwriters."

"Well, never mind. *I* can go."

"But what will she think of me? I ought to be the first to welcome her."

"I'll make your excuses."

"No, no; say nothing: after all, it was you who received the telegram: so you naturally meet her: but you will bring her here, father: you won't whisk my darling down to Elmtrees, till you have blessed me with the sight of her?"

"I will not be so cruel, fond lover," said old Wardlaw, laughing, and took up his hat and gloves to go.

Arthur went to the door with him, in great anxiety, lest he should question Burtenshaw: but, peering into the outer office, he observed Burtenshaw was not there. Michael had caught his employer's anxious look, and conveyed the banker into the small room, where the shorthand writer was at work. But Burtenshaw was one of a struggling firm; to him every minute was an hour: he had sat, fuming with impatience, so long as he heard talking in the inner office; and, the moment it ceased, he took the liberty of coming in: so that he opened the side door, just as Wardlaw senior was passing through the centre door.

Instantly, Wardlaw junior whipped before him, to hide his figure from his retreating father.

Wylie, who all this time had been sitting silent, looking from one to the other, and quietly puzzling out the game, as well as he could, observed this movement, and grinned.

As for Arthur Wardlaw, he saw his father safe out, then gave a sigh of relief, and walked to his office-table, and sat down, and began to fill in the check.

Burtenshaw drew near, and said, "I am instructed to say that fifty thousand pounds on account will be accepted."

Perhaps if this proposal had been made a few seconds sooner, the ingenious Arthur would have availed himself of it: but, as it was, he preferred to take the high and mighty tone. "I decline any concession," said he. "Mr. Penfold, take this check to the Bank of England. Eighty-one thousand six hundred forty-seven pounds, ten shillings. That is the amount, capital and interest, up to noon this day: hand the sum to Mr. Burtenshaw, taking his receipt, or, if he prefers it, pay it across the

counter, to my credit. That will perhaps arrest the run."

Burtenshaw stammered out his thanks.

Wardlaw cut him short. "Good-morning, sir," said he. "I have business of *importance*. Good-day," and bowed him out.

"This is a highflyer," thought Burtenshaw.

Wardlaw then opened the side door, and called his shorthand writer.

"Mr. Atkins, please step into the outer office, and don't let a soul come in to me. Mind, I am out for the day. Except to Miss Rolleston and her father."

He then closed all the doors, and sunk exhausted into a chair, muttering, "Thank Heaven! I have got rid of them all for an hour or two. *Now*, Wylie."

Wylie seemed in no hurry to enter upon the required subject.

Said he, evasively, "Why, guv'nor, it seems to me you are among the breakers here, yourself."

"Nothing of the sort, if you have managed your work cleverly. Come, tell me all, before we are interrupted again."

"Tell ye all about it! Why, there's part on't I am afraid to think on; let alone talk about it."

"Spare me your scruples, and give me your facts," said Wardlaw, coldly. "First of all, did you succeed in shifting the bullion as agreed?"

The sailor appeared relieved by this question.

"Oh, that is all right," said he. "I got the bullion safe aboard the Shannon, marked for lead."

"And the lead on board the Proserpine?"

"Ay, shipped as bullion."

"Without suspicion?"

"Not quite."

"Great Heaven! Who?"

"One clerk at the shipping agent's scented something queer, I think. His name was James Seaton."

"Could he prove anything?"

"Nothing. He knew nothing for certain; and what he guessed won't never be known in England now." And Wylie fidgeted in his chair.

Notwithstanding this assurance, Wardlaw looked grave, and took a note of that clerk's name. Then he begged Wylie to go on. "Give me all the details," said he. "Leave *me* to judge their relative value. You scuttled the ship?"

"Don't say that! don't say that!" cried Wylie, in a low but eager voice. "Stone walls have ears." Then rather more loudly than was necessary, "Ship sprung a leak, that neither the captain, nor I, nor anybody could find, to stop. Me and my men, we all think her seams opened, with stress of weather." Then, lowering his voice again, "Try and see it as we do; and don't you ever use such a word as that, what come out of your lips just now." Then, raising his voice suddenly, "We pumped her hard; but 'twarn't no use. She filled, and we had to take to the boats."

"Stop a moment. Was there any suspicion excited?"

"Not among the crew: and suppose there was, I could talk 'em all over, or buy 'em all over, what few of 'em is left. I'll keep 'em all with me in one house: and they are all square, don't you fear."

"Well, but you said 'among the *crew!*' Whom else can we have to fear?"

"Why, nobody. To be sure, one of the passengers was down on me; but what does that matter now?"

"It matters greatly — it matters terribly. Who was this passenger?"

"He called himself the Rev. John Hazel. He suspected something or other; and what with listening

here, and watching there, he judged the ship was never to see England, and I always fancied he told the lady."

"What, was there a lady there?"

"Ay, worse luck, sir; and a pretty girl she was: coming home to England to die of consumption; so our surgeon told me."

"Well, never mind her. The clergyman! This fills me with anxiety. A clerk suspecting us at Sydney, and a passenger suspecting us in the vessel. There are two witnesses against us already."

"No; only one."

"How do you make that out?"

"Why, White's clerk and the parson, they was one man."

Wardlaw stared in utter amazement.

"Don't ye believe me?" said Wylie. "I tell ye that there clerk boarded us under an alias. He had shaved off his beard; but, bless your heart, I knew him directly."

"He came to verify his suspicions," suggested Wardlaw, in a faint voice.

"Not he. He came for love of the sick girl, and nothing else; and you'll never see either him or her, if that is any comfort to you."

"Be good enough to conceal nothing. Facts must be faced."

"That is too true, sir. Well, the ship went down in latitude — But you have got a chart there before you. She went down hereabouts."

"Why, that was a long way from land," said Arthur.

"You may say that, sir. Well, we abandoned her, and took to the boats. I commanded one."

"And Hudson the other?"

"Hudson! No."

"Why, how was that? and what has become of him?"

"What has become of Hudson?" said Wylie, with

a start. "There's a question! And not a drop to wet my lips, and warm my heart. Is this a tale to tell, dry? Can't ye spare a drop of brandy to a poor devil that has earned ye a hundred and sixty thousand pounds, and risked his life and wrecked his soul to do it?"

Wardlaw cast a glance of contempt on him, but got up, and speedily put a bottle of old brandy, a tumbler, and a caraffe of water, on the table before him.

Wylie drank a wineglassful neat, and gave a sort of sigh of satisfaction. And then ensued a dialogue, in which, curiously enough, the brave man was agitated, and the timid man was cool and collected. But one reason was, the latter had not imagination enough to realize things unseen, though he had caused them.

Wylie told him how Hudson got to the bottle, and would not leave the ship. "I think I see him now, with his cutlass in one hand, and his rum bottle in the other, and the waves running over his poor, silly face, as she went down. Poor Hiram! he and I had made many a trip together, before we took to this!"

And Wylie shuddered, and took another gulp at the brandy.

While he was drinking to drown the picture, Wardlaw was calmly reflecting on the bare fact. "Hum," said he, "we must use that circumstance. I'll get it into the journals. Heroic captain. Went down with the ship. Who can suspect Hudson in the teeth of such a fact? Now, pray go on, my good Wylie. The boats?"

"Well, sir, I had the surgeon, and ten men, and the lady's maid, on board the long-boat; and there was the parson, the sick lady, and five sailors aboard the cutter. We sailed together, till night, steering for Juan Fernandez; then a fog came on, and we lost sight of the cutter, and I altered my mind and judged it best to beat to win'ard, and get into the track of ships. Which we

did, and were nearly swamped in a sou'wester; but, by good luck, a Yankee whaler picked us up, and took us to Buenos Ayres, where we shipped for England, what was left of us, only three, besides myself; but I got the signatures of the others to my tale of the wreck. It is all as square as a die, I tell you."

"Well done. Well done. But stop! the other boat, with that sham parson on board who knows all. She will be picked up, too, perhaps."

"There is no chance of that. She was out of the tracks of trade; and, I'll tell ye the truth, sir" — He poured out half a tumbler of brandy, and drank a part of it; and, now, for the first time, his hand trembled as he lifted the glass. — "Some fool had put the main of her provisions aboard the long-boat; that is what sticks to me, and won't let me sleep. We took a chance, but we didn't give one. I think I told you there was a woman aboard the cutter, that sick girl, sir. Oh, but it was hard lines for her, poor thing! I see her face, pale and calm; O Lord, so pale and calm; every night of my life; she kneeled aboard the cutter with her white hands a-clasped together, praying."

"Certainly, it is all very shocking," said Wardlaw; "but then, you know, if they had escaped, they would have exposed us. Believe me, it is all for the best."

Wylie looked at him with wonder. "Ay," said he, after staring at him a long time; "you can sit here at your ease, and doom a ship, and risk her people's lives. But if you had to do it, and see it, and then lie awake thinking of it, you'd wish all the gold on earth had been in hell, before you put your hand to such a piece of work."

Wardlaw smiled a ghastly smile. "In short," said he, "you don't mean to take the two thousand pounds I pay you for this little job."

"Oh, yes, I do; but for all the gold in Victoria, I wouldn't do such a job again. And, you mark my words, sir, we shall get the money, and nobody will ever be the wiser." — Wardlaw rubbed his hands complacently; his egotism, coupled with his want of imagination, nearly blinded him to everything but the pecuniary feature of the business. — "But," continued Wylie, "we shall never thrive on it. We have sunk a good ship, and we have as good as murdered a poor dying girl."

"Hold your tongue, ye fool!" cried Wardlaw, losing his sangfroid in a moment, for he heard somebody at the door.

It opened, and there stood a military figure in a travelling cap — General Rolleston.

CHAPTER XV.

As some eggs have actually two yolks, so Arthur Wardlaw had two hearts; and at sight of Helen's father, the baser one ceased to beat for a while.

He ran to General Rolleston, shook him warmly by the hand, and welcomed him to England with sparkling eyes.

It is pleasant to be so welcomed, and the stately soldier returned his grasp in kind.

"Is Helen with you, sir?" said Wardlaw, making a movement to go to the door: for he thought she must be outside in the cab.

"No, she is not," said General Rolleston.

"There now," said Arthur, "that cruel father of mine has broken his promise, and carried her off to Elmtrees."

At this moment Wardlaw senior returned, to tell Arthur he had been just too late to meet the Rollestons. "Oh, here he is!" said he; and there were fresh greetings.

"Well, but," said Arthur, "where is Helen?"

"I think it is I who ought to ask that question," said Rolleston, gravely. "I telegraphed you at Elmtrees, thinking of course she would come with you to meet me at the station. It does not much matter, a few hours: but her not coming makes me uneasy, for her health was declining when she left me. How is my child, Mr. Wardlaw? Pray tell me the truth."

Both the Wardlaws looked at one another, and at General Rolleston, and the elder Wardlaw said there was certainly some misunderstanding here.

"We fully believed that your daughter was coming home with you in the Shannon."

"Come home with me? Why, of course not. She sailed three weeks before me. Has she not arrived?"

"No," replied old Wardlaw, "we have neither seen nor heard of her."

"Why, what ship did she sail in?" said Arthur.

"In one of your own ships — the Proserpine."

Arthur Wardlaw fixed on the speaker a gaze full of horror; his jaw fell; a livid pallor spread over his features; he echoed in a hoarse whisper, "The Proserpine!" and turned his scared eyes upon Wylie, who was himself leaning against the wall, his stalwart frame beginning to tremble.

"The sick girl," murmured Wylie, and a cold sweat gathered on his brow.

General Rolleston looked from one to another with strange misgivings. which soon deepened into a sense of some terrible calamity; for now a strong convulsion swelled Arthur Wardlaw's heart; his face worked fearfully; and with a sharp and sudden cry, he fell forward on the table, and his father's arm alone prevented him from sinking like a dead man on the floor. Yet though crushed and helpless, he was not insensible; that blessing was denied him.

General Rolleston implored an explanation.

Wylie, with downcast and averted face, began to stammer a few disconnected and unintelligible words; but old Wardlaw silenced him, and said, with much feeling, "Let none but a father tell him. My poor, poor friend — The Proserpine! How can I say it?"

"Lost at sea," groaned Wylie.

At these fatal words the old warrior's countenance grew rigid; his large, bony hands gripped the back of the chair, on which he leaned, and were white with their

own convulsive force; and he bowed his head under the blow, without one word.

His was an agony too great and mute to be spoken to; and there was silence in the room, broken only by the hysterical moans of the miserable plotter, who had drawn down this calamity on his own head. He was in no state to be left alone; and even the bereaved father found pity in his desolate heart for one who loved his lost child so well; and the two old men took him home between them, in a helpless and pitiable condition.

CHAPTER XVI.

But this utter prostration of his confederate began to alarm Wylie, and rouse him to exertion. Certainly, he was very sorry for what he had done, and would have undone it and forfeited his two thousand pounds in a moment, if he could. But, as he could not undo the crime, he was all the more determined to reap the reward. Why, that two thousand pounds, for aught he knew, was the price of his soul; and he was not the man to let his soul go gratis.

He finished the rest of the brandy, and went after his men, to keep them true to him by promises; but the next day he came to the office in Fenchurch Street, and asked anxiously for Wardlaw. Wardlaw had not arrived. He waited, but the merchant never came; and Michael told him, with considerable anxiety, that this was the first time his young master had missed coming this five years.

In course of the day, several underwriters came in, with long faces, to verify the report which had now reached Lloyds', that the Proserpine had foundered at sea.

"It is too true," said Michael; "and poor Mr. Wylie here has barely escaped with his life. He was mate of the ship, gentlemen."

Upon this, each visitor questioned Wylie, and Wylie returned the same smooth answer to all inquiries: one heavy gale after another had so tried the ship that her seams had opened, and let in more water than all the exertions of the crew and passengers could discharge;

at last, they had taken to the boats; the long-boat had been picked up: the cutter had never been heard of since.

They nearly all asked after the ship's log.

"I have got it safe at home," said he. It was in his pocket all the time.

Some asked him where the other survivors were. He told them five had shipped on board the Maria, and three were with him at Poplar, one disabled by the hardships they had all endured.

One or two complained angrily of Mr. Wardlaw's absence at such a time.

"Well, good gentlemen," said Wylie, "I'll tell ye. Mr. Wardlaw's sweetheart was aboard the ship. He is a'most broken-hearted. He vallied her more than all the gold, that you may take your oath on."

This stroke, coming from a rough fellow in a pea-jacket, who looked as simple as he was cunning, silenced remonstrance, and went far to disarm suspicion; and so pleased Michael Penfold, that he said, "Mr. Wylie, you are interested in this business, would you mind going to Mr. Wardlaw's house, and asking what we are to do next? I'll give you his address, and a line, begging him to make an effort and see you. Business is the heart's best ointment. Eh, dear, Mr. Wylie, I have known grief too; and I think I should have gone mad when they sent my poor son away, but for business, especially the summing-up of long columns, etc."

This commission suited Mr. Wylie, who was alarmed on his own account at Arthur Wardlaw's absence from business. He called at the house in Russell Square, and asked to see Mr. Wardlaw.

The servant shook his head. "You can't see him; he is very ill."

"Very ill," said Wylie. "I'm sorry for that. Well,

but I shan't make him any worse; and Mr. Penfold says I must see him. It is very particular I tell you. He won't thank you for refusing me when he comes to hear of it."

He said this very seriously; and the servant, after a short hesitation, begged him to sit down in the passage a moment. He then went into the dining-room, and shortly reappeared, holding the door open. Out came, not Wardlaw junior, Wardlaw senior.

"My son is in no condition to receive you," said he gravely; "but I am at your service. What is your business?"

Wylie was taken off his guard, and stammered out something about the Shannon.

"The Shannon! What have you to do with her? You belonged to the Proserpine."

"Ay, sir; but I had his orders to ship forty chests of lead and smelted copper on board the Shannon."

"Well?"

"Ye see, sir," said Wylie, "Mr. Wardlaw was particular about them, and I feel responsible like, having shipped them aboard another vessel."

"Have you not the captain's receipt?"

"That I have, sir, at home. But you could hardly read it for salt water."

"Well," said Wardlaw senior, "I will direct our agent at Liverpool to look after them, and send them up at once to my cellars in Fenchurch Street. Forty chests of lead and copper, I think you said." And he took a note of this directly. Wylie was not a little discomfited at this unexpected turn things had taken; but he held his tongue now, for fear of making bad worse. Wardlaw senior went on to say that he should have to conduct the business of the firm for a time, in spite of his old age and failing health.

This announcement made Wylie perspire with anxiety, and his two thousand pounds seemed to melt away from him.

"But never mind," said old Wardlaw; "I am very glad you came. In fact, you are the very man I wanted to see. My poor afflicted friend has asked after you several times. Be good enough to follow me."

He led the way into the dining-room, and there sat the sad father in all the quiet dignity of calm, unfathomable sorrow.

Another gentleman stood upon the rug with his back to the fire, waiting for Mr. Wardlaw; this was the family physician, who had just come down from Arthur's bedroom, and had entered by another door, through the drawing-room.

"Well, doctor," said Wardlaw anxiously, "what is your report?"

"Not so good as I could wish; but nothing to excite immediate alarm. Overtaxed brain, sir: weakened and unable to support this calamity. However, we have reduced the fever; the symptoms of delirium have been checked, and I think we shall escape brain fever, if he is kept quite quiet. I could not have said as much this morning."

The doctor then took his leave, with a promise to call next morning; and as soon as he was gone, Wardlaw turned to General Rolleston, and said, "Here *is* Wylie, sir. Come forward, my man, and speak to the General. He wants to know if you can point out to him on the chart the very spot where the Proserpine was lost?"

"Well, sir," said Wylie, "I think I could."

The great chart of the Pacific was then spread out upon the table, and rarely has a chart been examined as this was, with the bleeding heart as well as the straining eye.

The rough sailor became an oracle; the others hung upon his words, and followed his brown finger on the chart with fearful interest.

"Ye see, sir," said he, addressing the old merchant, for there was something on his mind that made him avoid speaking directly to General Rolleston, "when we came out of Sydney, the wind being south and by east, Hudson took the easterly course, instead of running through Cook's Straits. The weather freshened from the same quarter, so that, with one thing and another, by when we were a month out, she was five hundred miles or so nor'ard of her true course. But that wasn't all; when the leak gained on us, Hudson ran the ship three hundred miles by my reckoning to the nor'east; and, I remember, the day before she foundered, he told me she was in latitude forty, and Easter Island bearing due north."

"Here is the spot, then," said General Rolleston, and placed his finger on the spot.

"Ay, sir," said Wylie, addressing the merchant; "but she ran about eighty-five miles after that, on an easterly course — no — wind on her starboard quarter — and being deep in the water, she'd make lee way — say eighty-two miles, nor'east by east."

The General took eighty-two miles off the scale, with a pair of dividers, and set out that distance on the chart. He held the instrument fixed on the point thus obtained.

Wylie eyed the point, and after a moment's consideration, nodded his head.

"There, or thereabouts," he said, in a low voice, and looking at the merchant.

A pause ensued, and the two old men examined the speck pricked on the map, as if it were the waters covering the Proserpine.

"Now, sir," said Rolleston, "trace the course of the boats;" and he handed Wylie a pencil.

The sailor slowly averted his head, but stretched out his hand and took it, and traced two lines, the one short and straight, running nearly north-east. "That's the way the cutter headed when we lost her in the night."

The other line ran parallel to the first for half an inch, then turning, bent backwards, and ran due south.

"This was *our* course," said Wylie.

General Rolleston looked up, and said, "Why did you desert the cutter?"

The mate looked at old Wardlaw, and, after some hesitation, replied, "After we lost sight of her, the men with me declared that we could not reach either Juan Fernandez or Valparaiso with our stock of provisions, and insisted on standing for the sea track of Australian liners between the Horn and Sydney."

This explanation was received in dead silence. Wylie fidgeted, and his eye wandered round the room.

General Rolleston applied his compasses to the chart. "I find that the Proserpine was not a thousand miles from Easter Island. Why did you not make for that land?"

"We had no charts, sir," said Wylie to the merchant, "and I'm no navigator."

"I see no land laid down hereaway, north-east of the spot where the ship went down."

"No," replied Wylie, "that's what the men said when they made me 'bout ship."

"Then why did you lead the way north-east at all?"

"I'm no navigator," answered the man, sullenly.

He then suddenly stammered out, "Ask my men what *we* went through. Why, sir, (to Wardlaw) I can hardly believe that I am alive, and sit here talking to you about this cursed business. And nobody offers me a drop of anything."

Wardlaw poured him out a tumbler of wine. His

brown hand trembled a little, and he gulped the wine down like water.

General Rolleston gave Mr. Wardlaw a look, and Wylie was dismissed. He slouched down the street all in a cold perspiration; but still clinging to his two thousand pounds, though small was now his hope of ever seeing it.

When he was gone, General Rolleston paced that large and gloomy room in silence. Wardlaw eyed him with the greatest interest, but avoided speaking to him. At last he stopped short, and stood erect, as veterans halt, and pointed down at the chart.

"I'll start at once for that spot," said he. "I'll go in the next ship bound to Valparaiso: there I'll charter a small vessel, and ransack those waters for some trace of my poor lost girl."

"Can you think of no better way than that?" said old Wardlaw, gently, and with a slight tone of reproach.

"No — not at this moment. Oh, yes, by the by, the Greyhound and Dreadnought are going out to survey the islands of the Pacific. I have interest enough to get a berth in the Greyhound."

"What! go in a Government ship! under the orders of a man, under the orders of another man, under the orders of a Board. Why, if you heard our poor girl was alive upon a rock, the Dreadnought would be sure to run up a bunch of red tape to the fore that moment to recall the Greyhound, and the Greyhound would go back. No," said he, rising suddenly, and confronting the General, and with the color mounting for once in his sallow face, "you sail in no bottom but one freighted by Wardlaw and Son, and the captain shall be under no orders but yours. We have bought the steam sloop Springbok, seven hundred tons. I'll victual her for a year, man her well, and you shall go out in her in less than a week. I give you my hand on that."

"HERE IS THE SPOT, THEN," SAID GENERAL ROLLESTON.

They grasped hands.

But this sudden warmth and tenderness coming from a man habitually cold, overpowered the stout general. "What, sir," he faltered; "your own son lies in danger, yet your heart goes so with me — such goodness — it is too much for me."

"No, no," faltered the merchant, affected in his turn; "it is nothing. Your poor girl was coming home in that cursed ship to marry my son. Yes, he lies ill for love of her; God help him and me too; but you most of all. Don't, General; don't! We have got work to do: we must be brave, sir, brave, I say, and compose ourselves. Ah, my friend, you and I are of one age; and this is a heavy blow for us: and we are friends no more; it has made us brothers: she was to be my child as well as yours; well, now she *is* my child, and our hearts they bleed together." At this, the truth must be told, the two stout old men embraced one another like two women, and cried together a little.

But that was soon over with such men as these. They sat together and plunged into the details of the expedition, and they talked themselves into hope.

In a week the Springbok steamed down the Channel on an errand inspired by love, not reason; to cross one mighty ocean, and grope for a lost daughter in another.

CHAPTER XVII.

We return to the cutter, and her living freight.

After an anxious but brief consultation, it was agreed that their best chance was to traverse as many miles of water as possible, while the wind was fair: by this means they would increase their small chance of being picked up, and also of falling in with land, and would, at all events, sail into a lovely climate where intense cold was unknown, and gales of wind uncommon.

Mr. Hazel advised them to choose a skipper, and give him absolute power, especially over the provisions. They assented to this. He then recommended Cooper for that post. But they had not fathomed the sterling virtues of that taciturn seaman; so they offered the command to Welch, instead.

"Me put myself over Sam Cooper!" said he; "not likely."

Then their choice fell upon Michael Morgan. The other sailors' names were Prince, Fenner, and Mackintosh.

Mr. Hazel urged Morgan to put the crew and passengers on short allowance at once, viz.: two biscuits a day, and four table-spoonfuls of water: but Morgan was a common sailor; he could not see clearly very far ahead; and, moreover, his own appetite counteracted this advice; he dealt out a pound of biscuit and an ounce of ham to each person, night and morning, and a pint of water in the course of the day.

Mr. Hazel declined his share of the ham, and begged Miss Rolleston, so earnestly, not to touch it, that she yielded a silent compliance.

On the fourth day the sailors were all in good spirits, though the provisions were now very low. They even sang, and spun yarns. This was partly owing to the beauty of the weather.

On the fifth day Morgan announced that he could only serve out one biscuit per day: and this sudden decline caused some dissatisfaction and alarm.

Next day, the water ran so low, that only a teaspoonful was served out night and morning.

There were murmurs and forebodings.

In all heavy trials and extremities some man or other reveals great qualities, that were latent in him, ay, hidden from himself. And this general observation was verified on the present occasion, as it had been in the Indian mutiny, and many other crises. Hazel came out.

He encouraged the men, out of his multifarious stores of learning; he related at length stories of wrecks and sufferings at sea; which, though they had long been in print, were most of them new to these poor fellows. He told them, among the rest, what the men of the Bona Dea, waterlogged at sea, had suffered — twelve days without any food but a rat and a kitten — yet had all survived. He gave them some details of the Wager, the Grosvenor, the Corbin, the Medusa; but, above all, a most minute account of the Bounty, and Bligh's wonderful voyage in an open boat, short of provisions. He moralized on this, and showed his fellow-sufferers it was discipline and self-denial from the first, that had enabled those hungry spectres to survive, and to traverse two thousand eight hundred miles of water, in those very seas; and that in spite of hunger, thirst, disease, and rough weather.

By these means he diverted their minds, in some degree, from their own calamity, and taught them the lesson they most needed.

The poor fellows listened with more interest than you could have thought possible under the pressure of bodily distress. And Helen Rolleston's hazel eye dwelled on the narrator with unceasing wonder.

Yes, learning and fortitude, strengthened by those great examples learning furnishes, maintained a superiority, even in the middle of the Pacific; and not the rough sailors only, but the lady, who had rejected and scorned his love, hung upon the brave student's words: she was compelled to look up, with wonder, to the man she had hated and despised in her hours of ease.

On the sixth day the provisions failed entirely. Not a crust of bread: not a drop of water.

At four P.M., several flying fish, driven into the air by the dolphins and catfish, fell into the sea again near the boat, and one struck the sail sharply, and fell into the boat. It was divided, and devoured raw, in a moment.

The next morning the wind fell, and, by noon, the ocean became like glass.

The horrors of a storm have been often painted; but who has described, or can describe, the horrors of a calm, to a boat-load of hungry, thirsty creatures, whose only chances of salvation or relief are wind and rain?

The beautiful, remorseless sky, was one vault of purple, with a great flaming jewel in the centre, whose vertical rays struck, and parched, and scorched the living sufferers; and blistered and baked the boat itself, so that it hurt their hot hands to touch it: the beautiful, remorseless ocean was one sheet of glass, that glared in their bloodshot eyes, and reflected the intolerable heat of heaven upon these poor wretches, who were gnawed to death with hunger; and their raging thirst was fiercer still.

Towards afternoon of the eighth day, Mackintosh dipped a vessel in the sea, with the manifest intention of drinking the salt water.

"Stop him!" cried Hazel, in great agitation; and the others seized him, and overpowered him: he cursed them with such horrible curses, that Miss Rolleston put her fingers in her ears, and shuddered from head to foot. Even this was new to her, to hear foul language.

A calm voice rose in the midst, and said: "Let us pray."

There was a dead silence, and Mr. Hazel kneeled down and prayed loud and fervently: and, while he prayed, the furious cries subsided for a while, and deep groans only were heard. He prayed for food, for rain, for wind, for patience.

The men were not so far gone but they could just manage to say "Amen."

He rose from his knees, and gathered the pale faces of the men together in one glance; and saw that intense expression of agony, which physical pain can mould with men's features: and then he strained his eyes over the brassy horizon; but no cloud, no veil of vapor was visible.

"Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink."

"We must be mad," he cried, "to die of thirst, with all this water round us."

His invention being stimulated by this idea, and his own dire need, he eagerly scanned everything in the boat, and his eyes soon lighted on two objects, disconnected in themselves, but it struck him he could use them in combination. These were a common glass bottle, and Miss Rolleston's life-preserving jacket, that served her for a couch. He drew this garment over his knees, and considered it attentively; then untwisted the brass nozzle through which the jacket was inflated, and so left a tube, some nine inches in length, hanging down from the neck of the garment.

He now applied his breath to the tube, and the jacket swelling rapidly proved that the whole receptacle was air-tight.

He then allowed the air to escape. Next, he took the bottle and filled it with water from the sea; then he inserted, with some difficulty, and great care, the neck of the bottle into the orifice of the tube: this done, he detached the wire of the brass nozzle, and whipped the tube firmly round the neck of the bottle.

"Now, light a fire," he cried; "no matter what it costs."

The fore thwart was chopped up, and a fire soon spluttered and sparkled, for ten eager hands were feeding it: the bottle was then suspended over it, and, in due course, the salt water boiled and threw off vapor, and the belly of the jacket began to heave and stir. Hazel then threw cold water upon the outside, to keep it cool, and while the men eagerly watched the bubbling bottle and swelling bag, his spirits rose, and he took occasion to explain that what was now going on under their eyes was, after all, only one of the great processes of Nature done upon a small scale. "The clouds," said he, "are but vapors drawn from the sea, by the heat of the sun: these clouds are composed of fresh water, and so the steam we are now raising from salt water will be fresh. We can't make whiskey, or brew beer, lads; but, thank Heaven, we can brew water; and it is worth all other liquors ten times told."

A wild "Hurrah!" greeted these words.

But every novel experiment seems doomed to fail, or meet with some disaster. The water in the bottle had been reduced too low, by vaporization, and the bottle burst suddenly, with a loud report. That report was followed by a piteous wail.

Hazel turned pale at this fatal blow: but recovering

himself, he said, "That is unfortunate; but it was a good servant while it lasted: give me the baler; and, Miss Rolleston, can you lend me a thimble?"

The tube of the life preserver was held over the baler, and out trickled a small quantity of pure water, two thimblefuls apiece. Even that, as it passed over their swollen tongues and parched swallows, was a heavenly relief; but, alas! the supply was then exhausted.

Next day hunger seemed uppermost, and the men gnawed and chewed their tobacco-pouches: and two caps, that had been dressed with the hair on, were divided for food.

None was given to Mr. Hazel or Miss Rolleston; and this, to do the poor creatures justice, was the first instance of partiality the sailors had shown.

The lady, though tormented with hunger, was more magnanimous; she offered to divide the contents of her little medicine-chest; and the globules were all devoured in a moment.

And now their tortures were aggravated by the sight of abundance. They drifted over coral rocks, at a considerable depth, but the water was so exquisitely clear that they saw five fathoms down. They discerned small fish drifting over the bottom; they looked like a driving cloud, so vast was their number; and every now and then there was a scurry among them, and porpoises and dog-fish broke in and feasted on them. All this they saw, yet could not catch one of those billions for their lives. Thus they were tantalized as well as starved.

The next day was like the last, with this difference, that the sufferers could no longer endure their torments in silence.

The lady moaned constantly: the sailors groaned, lamented, and cursed.

The sun baked, and blistered; and the water glared.

The sails being useless, the sailors rigged them as an awning, and salt water was constantly thrown over them.

Mr. Hazel took a baler and drenched his own clothes and Miss Rolleston's upon their bodies. This relieved the hell of thirst in some degree: but the sailors could not be persuaded to practise it.

In the afternoon Hazel took Miss Rolleston's Bible from her wasted hands, and read aloud the forty-second Psalm.

When he had done, one of the sailors asked him to pass the Bible forward. He did so; and in half an hour the leaves were returned him; the vellum binding had been cut off, divided, and eaten.

He looked piteously at the leaves, and, after a while, fell upon his knees, and prayed silently.

He rose, and, with Miss Rolleston's consent, offered the men the leaves as well. "It is the Bread of Life for men's souls, not their bodies," said he. "But God is merciful; I think he will forgive you; for your need is bitter."

Cooper replied that the binding was man's, but the pages were God's; and, either for this or another more obvious reason, the leaves were declined for food.

All that afternoon Hazel was making a sort of rough spoon out of a fragment of wood.

The night that followed was darker than usual, and, about midnight, a hand was laid on Helen Rolleston's shoulder, and a voice whispered, "Hush! say nothing. I have got something for you."

At the same time, something sweet and deliciously fragrant, was put to her lips; she opened her mouth, and received a spoonful of marmalade. Never did marmalade taste like that before. It dissolved itself like ambrosia over her palate, and even relieved her parched throat in some slight degree by the saliva it excited.

Nature could not be resisted; her body took whatever he gave. But her high mind rebelled.

"Oh, how base I am," said she, and wept.

"Why, it is your own," said he, soothingly; "I took it out of your cabin expressly for you."

"At least oblige me by eating some yourself, sir," said Helen, "or (with a sudden burst) I will die ere I touch another morsel."

"I feel the threat, Miss Rolleston; but I do not need it, for I am very, very hungry. But no; if *I* take any, I must divide it all with *them*. But if you will help me unrip the jacket, I will suck the inside — after you."

Helen gazed at him, and wondered at the man, and at the strange love which had so bitterly offended her, when she was surrounded by comforts; but now it extorted her respect.

They unripped the jacket, and found some moisture left. They sucked it, and it was a wonderful, an incredible relief to their parched gullets.

The next day was a fearful one. Not a cloud in the sky to give hope of rain; the air so light, it only just moved them along; and the sea glared, and the sun beat on the poor wretches, now tortured into madness with hunger and thirst.

The body of man, in this dire extremity, can suffer internal agony as acute as any that can be inflicted on its surface by the knife; and the cries, the screams, the groans, the prayers, the curses, intermingled, that issued from the boat, were not to be distinguished from the cries of men horribly wounded in battle, or writhing under some terrible operation in hospitals.

Oh, it was terrible and piteous to see and hear the boat-load of ghastly victims, with hollow cheeks, and wild-beast eyes, go groaning, cursing, and shrieking

loud, upon that fair glassy sea, below that purple vault and glorious sun.

Towards afternoon, the sailors got together, forward, and left Hazel and Miss Rolleston alone in the stern. This gave him an opportunity of speaking to her confidentially. He took advantage of it, and said, "Miss Rolleston, I wish to consult you. Am I justified in secreting the marmalade any longer? There is nearly a spoonful apiece."

"No," said Helen, "divide it amongst them all. Oh, if I had only a woman beside me, to pray with, and cry with, and die with: for die we must."

"I am not so sure of that," said Hazel faintly, but with a cool fortitude all his own. "Experience proves that the human body can subsist a prodigious time on very little food: and saturating the clothes with water is, I know, the best way to allay thirst. And women, thank heaven, last longer than men, under privations."

"I shall not last long, sir," said Helen. "Look at their eyes."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that those men there are going to kill me."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hazel thought her reason was going; and, instead of looking at the men's eyes, it was hers he examined. But no; the sweet cheek was white, the eyes had a fearful hollow all round them, but, out of that cave, the light hazel eye, preternaturally large, but calm as ever, looked out, full of fortitude, resignation, and reason.

"Don't look at *me*," said she, quietly; "but take an opportunity and look at *them*. They mean to kill me."

Hazel looked furtively round; and, being enlightened in part by the woman's intelligence, he observed that some of the men were actually glaring at himself and Helen Rolleston, in a dreadful way. There was a remarkable change in their eyes since he looked last. The pupils seemed diminished, the whites enlarged; and, in a word, the characteristics of humanity had, somehow, died out of those bloodshot orbs, and the animal alone shone in them now; the wild beast, driven desperate by hunger.

What he saw, coupled with Helen's positive interpretation of it, was truly sickening.

These men were six, and he but one. They had all clasp knives; and he had only an old penknife that would be sure to double up, or break off, if a blow were dealt with it.

He asked himself in utter terror, what on earth he should do.

The first thing seemed to be to join the men, and learn their minds: it might also be as well to prevent this secret conference from going further.

He went forward boldly, though sick at heart, and said, "Well, my lads, what is it?"

The men were silent directly, and looked sullenly down, avoiding his eye; yet not ashamed.

In a situation so terrible, the senses are sharpened; and Hazel dissected, in his mind, this sinister look, and saw that Morgan, Prince, and Mackintosh were hostile to him.

But Welch and Cooper he hoped were still friendly.

"Sir," said Fenner, civilly but doggedly, "we are come to this now, that one must die, for the others to live: and the greater part of us are for casting lots all round, and let every man, and every woman too, take their chance. That is fair, Sam, isn't it?"

"It is fair," said Cooper, with a terrible doggedness. "But it is hard," he added.

"Harder that seven should die for one," said Mackintosh. "No, no: one must die for the seven."

Hazel represented, with all the force language possesses, that what they meditated was a crime, the fatal result of which was known by experience.

But they heard in ominous silence.

Hazel went back to Helen Rolleston: and sat down right before her.

"Well!" said she, with supernatural calmness.

"You were mistaken," said he.

"Then why have you placed yourself between them and me? No; no: their eyes have told me they have singled me out. But what does it matter? We poor creatures are all to die; and that one is the happiest that dies first, and dies unstained by such a crime. *I heard every word you said, sir!*"

Hazel cast a piteous look on her, and, finding he could no longer deceive her as to their danger, and being weakened by famine, fell to trembling and crying.

Helen Rolleston looked at him with calm and gentle pity. For a moment, the patient fortitude of a woman made her a brave man's superior.

Night came, and, for the first time, Hazel claimed two portions of the rum; one for himself, and one for Miss Rolleston.

He then returned aft, and took the helm. He loosened it, so as to be ready to unship it in a moment, and use it as a weapon.

The men huddled together forward, and it was easy to see that the boat was now divided into two hostile camps.

Hazel sat quaking with his hand on the helm, fearing an attack every moment.

Both he and Helen listened acutely, and about three o'clock in the morning, a new incident occurred, of a terrible nature.

Mackintosh was heard to say, "Serve out the rum, no allowance," and the demand was instantly complied with by Morgan.

Then Hazel touched Miss Rolleston on the shoulder, and insisted on her taking half what was left of the marmalade: and he took the other half. The time was gone by for economy: what they wanted now was strength, in case the wild beasts, maddened by drink as well as hunger, should attack them.

Already the liquor had begun to tell, and wild hallos and yells, and even fragments of ghastly songs, mingled with the groans of misery in the doomed boat.

At sunrise there was a great swell upon the water, with sharp gusts at intervals; and on the horizon, to windward, might be observed a black spot in the sky, no bigger than a fly. But none saw that; Hazel's eye never left the raving wretches in the forepart of the boat; Cooper and Welch sat in gloomy despair amidships; and

the others were huddled together forward, encouraging each other to a desperate act.

It was about eight o'clock in the morning, Helen Rolleston awoke from a brief doze, and said, "Mr. Hazel, I have had a strange dream. I dreamed there was food, and plenty of it, on the outside of this boat."

While these strange words were yet in her mouth, three of the sailors suddenly rose up with their knives drawn, and eyes full of murder, and staggered aft as fast as their enfeebled bodies could.

Hazel uttered a loud cry, "Welch! Cooper! will you see us butchered?" and rose to his feet.

Cooper put out his arm to stop Mackintosh, but was too late. He did stop Morgan, however, and said, "Come, none of that; no foul play!"

Irritated by this unexpected resistance, and maddened by drink, Morgan turned on Cooper and stabbed him; he sank down with a groan. On this Welch gave Morgan a fearful gash, dividing his jugular, and was stabbed, in return, by Prince, but not severely: these two grappled and rolled over one another, stabbing and cursing at the bottom of the boat; meantime, Hazel had unshipped the helm, and Mackintosh was received by him with a point blank thrust in the face from it that staggered him, though a very powerful man, and drove him backwards against the mast; but, in delivering this thrust, Hazel's foot slipped, and he fell with great violence on his head and arm; Mackintosh recovered himself, and sprang upon the stern thwart with his knife up and gleaming over Helen Rolleston. Hazel writhed round where he lay, and struck him desperately on the knee with the helm. The poor woman knew only how to suffer; she cowered a little, and put up two feeble hands.

The knife descended.

But not upon that cowering figure.

CHAPTER XIX.

A PURPLE rippling line upon the water had for some little time been coming down from the east with great rapidity: but, bent on bloody work, the crew had not observed it. The boat heeled over under the sudden gust; but Mackintosh had already lost his footing under Hazel's blow, and the boom striking him suddenly almost at the same moment, he went clean over the gunwale into the sea; he struck it with his knife first.

All their lives were now gone if Cooper, who had already recovered his feet, had not immediately cut the sheet with his knife; there was no time to slack it; and, even as it was, the lower part of the sail was drenched, and the boat full of water.

"Ship the helm," he roared.

The boat righted directly the sheet was cut, the wet sail flapped furiously, and the boat having way on her yielded to the helm and wriggled slowly away before the whistling wind.

Mackintosh rose a few yards astern, and swam after the boat, with great glaring eyes; the loose sail was not drawing, but the wind moved the boat onward. However, Mackintosh gained slowly, and Hazel held up an oar like a spear, and shouted to him that he must promise solemnly to forego all violence, or he should never come on board alive.

Mackintosh opened his mouth to reply; but, at the same moment, his eyes suddenly dilated in a fearful way, and he went under water, with a gurgling cry. Yet, not like one drowning, but with a jerk.

The next moment there was a great bubbling of the water, as if displaced by some large creatures struggling below, and then the surface was stained with blood.

And, lest there should be any doubt as to the wretched man's fate, the huge back fin of a monstrous shark came soon after, gliding round and round the rolling boat, awaiting the next victim.

Now, while the water was yet stained with his life blood, who, hurrying to kill, had met a violent death, the unwounded sailor, Fenner, excited by the fracas, broke forth into singing, and so completed the horror of a wild and awful scene: for still while he shouted, laughed, and sang, the shark swam calmly round and round, and the boat crept on, her white sail bespattered with blood — which was not so before — and in her bottom lay one man dead as a stone; and two poor wretches, Prince and Welch, their short-lived feud composed forever, sat openly sucking their bleeding wounds, to quench, for a moment, their intolerable thirst.

Oh, little do we, who never pass a single day without bite or sup, know the animal, Man, in these dire extremities.

CHAPTER XX.

At last Cooper ordered Fenner to hold his jaw, and come aft and help sail the boat.

But the man, being now stark mad, took no notice of the order. His madness grew on him, and took a turn by no means uncommon in these cases. He saw before him sumptuous feasts, and streams of fresh water flowing. These he began to describe with great volubility and rapture, smacking his lips, and exulting: and so he went on tantalizing them till noon.

Meantime, Cooper asked Mr. Hazel if he could sail the boat. The squall had passed, and the breeze was now steady from the south-west.

"I can steer," said Hazel, "but that is all. My right arm is benumbed."

The silvery voice of Helen Rolleston then uttered brave and welcome words. "I will do whatever you tell me, Mr. Cooper."

"Long life to you, miss!" said the wounded seaman. He then directed her how to reef the sail, and splice the sheet which he had been obliged to cut; and in a word, to sail the boat; which she did with some little assistance from Hazel.

And so they all depended upon her, whom some of them had been for killing; and the blood-stained boat glided before the wind.

At two P.M. Fenner jumped suddenly up, and looking at the sea with rapture, cried out, "Aha! my boys, here's a beautiful green meadow; and there's a sweet brook with bulrushes: green, green, green! Let's have a roll

among the daisies." And, in a moment, ere any of his stiff and wounded shipmates could put out a hand, he threw himself on his back upon the water, and sunk forever, with inexpressible rapture on his corpse-like face.

A feeble groan was the only tribute those who remained behind could afford him.

At three P.M. Mr. Hazel happened to look over the weather-side of the boat, as she heeled to leeward under a smart breeze, and he saw a shell or two fastened to her side, about eleven inches above her keel. He looked again, and gave a loud hurrah. "Barnacles! barnacles!" he cried. "I see them sticking."

He leaned over, and, with some difficulty, detached one, and held it up.

It was not a barnacle, but a curious oblong shell-fish, open at one end.

At sight of this, the wounded forgot their wounds, and leaned over the boat's side, detaching the shell-fish with their knives. They broke them with the handles of their knives, and devoured the fish. They were as thick as a man's finger, and about an inch long, and as sweet as a nut. It seems that in the long calm these shell-fish had fastened on the boat. More than a hundred of them were taken off her weather-side, and evenly divided.

Miss Rolleston, at Hazel's earnest request, ate only six, and these very slowly, and laid the rest by. But the sailors could not restrain themselves; and Prince, in particular, gorged himself so fiercely that he turned purple in the face, and began to breathe very hard.

That black speck on the horizon had grown, by noon, to a beetle, and by three o'clock to something more like an elephant, and it now diffused itself into a huge black cloud that gradually overspread the heavens; and, at last, about half an hour before sunset, came a peculiar

chill, and then, in due course, a drop or two fell upon the parched wretches. They sat, less like animals than like plants, all stretching towards their preserver.

Their eyes were turned up to the clouds, so were their open mouths, and their arms and hands held up towards it.

The drops increased in number, and praise went up to heaven in return.

Patter, patter, patter; down came a shower, a rain — a heavy, steady rain.

With cries of joy, they put out every vessel to catch it; they lowered the sail, and, putting ballast in the centre, bellied it into a great vessel to catch it. They used all their spare canvas to catch it. They filled the water-cask with it; they filled the keg that had held the fatal spirit; and all the time they were sucking the wet canvas and their own clothes, and their very hands and garments on which the life-giving drops kept falling.

Then they set their little sail again, and prayed for land to Him who had sent them wind and rain.

CHAPTER XXI.

The breeze declined at sunset; but it rained at intervals during the night; and by the morning they were somewhat chilled.

Death had visited them again during the night. Prince was discovered dead and cold; his wounds were mere scratches, and there seems to be no doubt that he died by gorging himself with more food than his enfeebled system could possibly digest.

Thus dismally began a day of comparative bodily comfort, but mental distress, especially to Miss Rolleston and Mr. Hazel.

Now that this lady and gentleman were no longer goaded to madness by physical suffering, their higher sensibilities resumed their natural force, and the miserable contents of the blood-stained boat shocked them terribly. Two corpses and two wounded men.

Mr. Hazel, however, soon came to one resolution, and that was to read the funeral service over the dead, and then commit them to the deep. He declared his intention, and Cooper, who, though wounded, and apparently sinking, was still skipper of the boat, acquiesced readily.

Mr. Hazel took the dead men's knives and their money out of their pockets, and read the burial service over them; they were then committed to the deep. This sad ceremony performed, he addressed a few words to the survivors.

"My friends and brothers in affliction, we ought not to hope too much from Divine mercy for ourselves; or we should soon come to forget Divine justice. But we

are not forbidden to hope for others. Those, who are now gone, were guilty of a terrible crime; but then they were tempted more than their flesh could bear; and they received their punishment here on earth: we may therefore hope they will escape punishment hereafter. And it is for us to profit by their fate, and bow to Heaven's will: even when they drew their knives, food in plenty was within their reach, and the signs of wind were on the sea, and of rain in the sky. Let us be more patient than they were, and place our trust — What is that upon the water to leeward? A piece of wood floating?"

Welch stood up and looked. "Can't make it out. Steer alongside it, miss, if you please." And he crept forward.

Presently he became excited, and directed those in the stern how to steer the boat close to the object without going over it. He begged them all to be silent. He leaned over the boat side as they neared it. He clutched it suddenly with both hands, and flung it into the boat with a shout of triumph; but sank exhausted by the effort.

It was a young turtle; and being asleep on the water, or inexperienced, had allowed them to capture it.

This was indeed a godsend: twelve pounds of succulent meat. It was instantly divided, and Mr. Hazel contrived, with some difficulty, to boil a portion of it. He enjoyed it greatly; but Miss Rolleston showed a curious and violent antipathy to it, scarcely credible under the circumstances. Not so the sailors. They devoured it raw, what they could get at all. Cooper could only get down a mouthful or two: he had received his death wound, and was manifestly sinking.

He revived, however, from time to time, and spoke cheerfully, whenever he spoke at all. Welch informed him of every incident that took place, however minute. Then he would nod, or utter a syllable or two.

On being told that they were passing through seaweed, he expressed a wish to see some of it, and, when he had examined it, he said to Hazel, "Keep up your heart, sir; you are not a hundred miles from land." He added gently, after a pause, "but I am bound for another port."

About five in the afternoon, Welch came aft, with the tears in his eyes, to say that Sam was just going to slip his cable, and had something to say to them.

They went to him directly, and Hazel took his hand, and exhorted him to forgive all his enemies.

"Han't a got none," was the reply.

Hazel then, after a few words of religious exhortation and comfort, asked him if he could do anything for him.

"Ay," said Cooper, solemnly. "Got pen and ink aboard, any of ye?"

"I have a pencil," said Helen, earnestly; then tearfully, "oh, dear! it is to make his will." After searching in vain for paper she offered her prayer-book, which had two blank leaves under each cover.

The dying man saw it, and rose into that remarkable energy, which sometimes precedes the departure of the soul.

"Write!" said he, in his deep, full tones.

"I, Samuel Cooper, able seaman, am going to slip my cable, and sail into the presence of my Maker."

He waited till this was written.

"And so I speak the truth."

"The ship Proserpine was destroyed wilful."

"The men had more allowance than they signed for."

"The mate was always plying the captain with liquor."

"Two days before ever the ship leaked the mate got the long-boat ready."

"When the Proserpine sank, we was on her port quarter, aboard the cutter, was me and my messmate Tom Welch."

"We saw two auger holes in her starn, about two inches diameter."

"Them two holes was made from within, for the splinters showed outside."

"She was a good ship, and met with no stress of weather to speak of, on that voyage."

"Joe Wylie scuttled her and destroyed her people."

"D——n his eyes!"

Mr. Hazel was shocked at this finale: but he knew what sailors are, and how little meaning there is in their set phrases. However, as a clergyman, he could not allow these to be Cooper's last words: so he said earnestly, "Yes, but, my poor fellow, you said you forgave all your enemies. We all need forgiveness, you know."

"That is true, sir."

"And you forgive this Wylie, do you not?"

"Oh Lord, yes," said Cooper, faintly. "I forgive the lubber; d——n him!"

Having said these words with some difficulty, he became lethargic, and so remained for two hours. Indeed he spoke but once more, and that was to Welch; though they were all about him then. "Messmate," said he, in a voice that was now faint and broken, "you and I must sail together on this new voyage. I'm going out of port first; but" (in a whisper of inconceivable tenderness and simple cunning) "I'll lie-to outside the harbor till you come out, my bo." Then he paused a moment. Then he added, softly, "For I love you, Tom."

These sweet words were the last of that rugged, silent sailor, who never threw a word away, and whose rough

breast enclosed a friendship as of the ancient world, tender, true, and everlasting, that sweetened his life, and ennobled his death. As he deserved mourners, so he had true ones. His last words went home to the afflicted hearts that heard them, and the lady and gentleman, whose lives he had saved at the cost of his own, wept aloud over their departed friend. But his messmate's eye was dry. When all was over, he just turned to the mourners, and said, gravely, "Thank ye, sir: thank ye kindly, ma'am." And then he covered the body decently with the spare canvas, and lay quietly down, with his own head pillowed upon those loved remains.

Towards afternoon, seals were observed sporting on the waters; but no attempt was made to capture them. Indeed Miss Rolleston had quite enough to do to sail the boat with Mr. Hazel's assistance.

The night passed, and the morning brought nothing new: except that they fell in with seaweed in such quantities, the boat could hardly get through it. Mr. Hazel examined this seaweed carefully, and brought several kinds upon deck. Amongst the varieties, was one like thin green strips of spinach, very tender and succulent. His botanical researches included seaweed, and he recognized this as one of the edible rock-weeds. There was very little of it comparatively, but he took great pains, and, in two hours' time, had gathered as much as might fill a good slop-basin. He washed it in fresh water, and then asked Miss Rolleston for a pocket-handkerchief. This he tied so as to make a bag, and contrived to boil it with the few chips of fuel that remained on board.

After he had boiled it ten minutes, there was no more fuel, except a bowl or two, and the boat-hook, one pair of oars, and the midship and stern thwarts.

He tasted it, and found it glutinous and delicious; he

gave Miss Rolleston some, and then fed Welch with the rest. He, poor fellow, enjoyed this sea spinach greatly, he could no longer swallow meat.

While Hazel was feeding him, a flight of ducks passed over their heads, high in the air.

Welch pointed up at them.

"Ah!" said Helen, "if we had but their wings!"

Presently a bird was seen coming in the same direction, but flying very low; it wobbled along towards them very slowly, and, at last, to their great surprise, came flapping and tried to settle on the gunwale of the boat. Welch, with that instinct of slaughter which belongs to men, stuck the boat-hook into the bird's back; and it was soon despatched. It proved to be one of that very flock of ducks that had passed over their heads, and a crab was found fastened to its leg. It is supposed that the bird, to break its long flight, had rested on some reef, and, perhaps, been too busy fishing; and caught this Tartar.

Hazel pounced upon it. "Heaven has sent this for you; because you cannot eat turtle." But the next moment he blushed and recovered his reason. "See," said he, referring to her own words, "this poor bird had wings; yet death overtook her."

He sacrificed a bowl for fuel, and boiled the duck and the crab in one pot, and Miss Rolleston ate demurely but plentifully of both. Of the crab's shell he made a little drinking vessel for Miss Rolleston.

Cooper remained without funeral rites all this time; the reason was that Welch lay with his head pillowed upon his dear friend, and Hazel had not the heart to disturb him.

But it was the survivors' duty to commit him to the deep, and so Hazel sat down by Welch, and asked him kindly whether he would not wish the services of the Church to be read over his departed friend.

"In course, sir," said Welch. But the next moment he took Hazel's meaning, and said hurriedly, "No, no! I can't let Sam be buried in the sea. You see, sir, Sam and I, we are used to one another, and I can't abide to part with him, alive or dead."

"Ah!" said Hazel, "the best friends must part, when death takes one."

"Ay, ay, when t'other lives. But, Lord bless you, sir! I shan't be long astarn of my messmate here; can't you see that?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Hazel, surprised and alarmed. "Why, you are not wounded mortally, as Cooper was. Have a good heart, man, and we three will all see old England yet."

"Well, sir," said Welch, coolly, "I'll tell ye; me and my shipmate, Prince, was a-cutting at one another with our knives a smart time (and I do properly wonder, when I think of that day's work, for I liked the man well enough: but rum atop of starvation plays hell with seafaring men): well, sir, as I was a-saying, he let more blood out of me than I could afford to lose under the circumstances. And, ye see, I can't make fresh blood, because my throat is so swelled by the drought, I can't swallow much meat, so I'm safe to lose the number of my mess; and, another thing, my heart isn't altogether set towards living. Sam, here, he give me an order; what, didn't ye hear him? 'I'll lie-to outside the bar,' says he, 'till you come out.' He expects me to come out in his wake. Don't ye, Sam — that was?" and he laid his hands gently on the remains. "Now, sir, I shall ax the lady and you a favor. I want to lie alongside Sam. But if you bury him in the sea, and me ashore, why d——n my eyes if I shan't be a thousand years or so before I can find my own messmate. Etarnity is a 'nation big place, I am told, a hundred times as big as

both oceans. No, sir; you'll make land, by Sam's reckoning, to-morrow or next day, wind and tide permitting. I'll take care of Sam's hull till then, and we'll lie together till the angel blows that there trumpet; and then'll we'll go aloft together, and, as soon as ever we have made our scrape to our betters, we'll both speak a good word for you and the lady; a very pretty lady she is, and a good-hearted, and the best plucked one I ever did see in any distressed craft; now don't ye cry, miss, don't ye cry, your trouble is pretty near over; *he* said you was not a hundred miles from land; I don't know how he knew that, he was always a better seaman than I be; but say it he did, and that is enough, for he was a man as never told a lie, nor wasted a word."

Welch could utter no more just then; for the glands of his throat were swollen, and he spoke with considerable difficulty.

What could Hazel reply? The judgment is sometimes ashamed to contradict the heart with cold reasons.

He only said, with a sigh, that he saw no signs of land, and believed they had gone on a wrong course, and were in the heart of the Pacific.

Welch made no answer, but a look of good-natured contempt. The idea of this parson contradicting Sam Cooper!

The sun broke, and revealed the illimitable ocean; themselves a tiny speck on it.

Mr. Hazel whispered Miss Rolleston that Cooper *must* be buried to-day.

At ten P.M. they passed through more sea-weed; but this time they had to eat the sea-spinach raw, and there was very little of it.

At noon the sea was green in places.

Welch told them this was a sign they were nearing land.

At four P.M. a bird, about the size and color of a woodpecker, settled on the boat's mast.

Their glittering eyes fastened on it; and Welch said, "Come, there's a supper for you as can eat it."

"No, poor thing!" said Helen Rolleston.

"You are right," said Hazel, with a certain effort of self-restraint. "Let our sufferings make us gentle, not savage; that poor bird is lost like us upon this ocean. It is a land-bird."

"How do you know that?"

"Water-birds have webbed feet — to swim with."

The bird, having rested, flew to the north-west.

Helen, by one of those inspired impulses her sex have, altered the boat's course directly, and followed the bird.

Half an hour before sunset, Helen Rolleston, whose vision was very keen, said she saw something at the verge of the horizon, like a hair standing upright.

Hazel looked, but could not see anything.

In ten minutes more, Helen Rolleston pointed it out again; and then Hazel did see a vertical line, more like a ship's mast than anything else one could expect to see there.

Their eyes were now strained to make it out, and as the boat advanced, it became more and more palpable, though it was hard to say exactly what it was.

Five minutes before the sun set, the air being clearer than ever, it stood out clean against the sky. A tree — a lofty, solitary tree, with a tall stem, like a column, and branches only at the top.

A palm-tree — in the middle of the Pacific.

CHAPTER XXII.

And but for the land-bird which rested on their mast, and for their own mercy in sparing it, they would have passed to the eastward, and never seen that giant palm-tree in mid-ocean.

"Oh, let us put out all her sails, and fly to it!" cried Helen.

Welch smiled and said, "No, miss, ye mustn't. Lord love ye; what! run on to a land ye don't know, happy go lucky, in the dark, like that? Lay her head for the tree, and welcome, but you must lower the mainsel, and treble reef the foresel; and so creep on a couple of knots an hour, and, by day-break, you'll find the island under your lee. Then you can look out for a safe landing-place."

"The island, Mr. Welch!" said Helen. "There is no island, or I should have seen it."

"Oh, the island was hull down. Why, you don't think as palm-trees grow in the water? You do as I say, or you'll get wrecked on some thundering reef or other."

Upon this Mr. Hazel and Miss Rolleston set to work, and, with considerable difficulty, lowered the mainsail, and treble reefed the foresail.

"That is right," said Welch. "To-morrow you'll land in safety, and bury my messmate and me."

"Oh, no!" cried Helen Rolleston. "We must bury him, but we mean to cure you."

They obeyed Welch's instructions, and so crept on all night; and, so well had this able seaman calculated dis-

tance and rate of sailing, that, when the sun rose, sure enough there was an island under their lee, distant about a league, though it looked much less. But the palm-tree was more than twice that distance. By force of wind and current they had made lee-way all night, and that tree stood on the most westerly point of the island.

Hazel and Miss Rolleston stood up and hurrahed for joy; then fell on their knees in silent gratitude. Welch only smiled.

But though there was no broken water at sea, yet breakers, formidable to such a craft as theirs, were seen foaming over long disjointed reefs ahead that grinned black and dangerous here and there.

They then consulted Welch, and he told them they must tack directly, and make a circuit of the island to land. He had to show them how to tack; and, the sea rising, they got thoroughly wetted, and Miss Rolleston rather frightened; for here was a peril they had wonderfully escaped hitherto.

However, before eleven o'clock, they had stood out to sea, and coasted the whole south side of the island: they then put the boat before the wind, and soon ran past the east coast, which was very narrow, — in fact, a sort of bluff-head, — and got on the north side of the island. Here the water was comparatively smooth, and the air warm and balmy.

They kept about a mile off the shore, and ranged along the north side, looking out for a good landing.

Here was no longer an unbroken line of cliffs, but an undulating shore, with bulging rocks, and lines of reef. After a mile or two of that the coast ran out seaward, and they passed close to a most extraordinary phenomenon of vegetation; great tangled woods crowned the shore and the landward slopes, and their grand foliage seemed

to flow over into the sea: for here was a broad rocky flat intersected with a thousand little channels of the sea; and the thousand little islets so formed, were crowded, covered, and hidden with luxuriant vegetation. Huge succulent leaves of the richest hue hung over the water, and one or two of the most adventurous of them showed, by the crystals that sparkled on their green surface, that the waves had actually been kissing them at high tide. This ceased, and they passed right under a cliff, crowned with trees above.

This cliff was broad and irregular, and in one of its cavities a cascade of pure fresh water came sparkling, leaping, and tumbling down to the foot of the rock. There it had formed a great basin of water, cool, deep, transparent, which trickled over on to a tongue of pink sand, and went in two crystal gutters to the sea.

Great and keen was the rapture this sight caused our poor parched voyagers, and eager their desire to land at once, if possible, and plunge their burning lips, and swelling throats, and fevered hands into that heavenly liquid; but the next moment they were diverted from that purpose by the scene that burst on them.

This wooded cliff, with its wonderful cascade, was the very gate of paradise. They passed it, and in one moment were in a bay — a sudden bay wonderfully deep for its extent, and sheltered on three sides. Broad sands with rainbow tints, all sparkling, and dotted with birds, some white as snow, some gorgeous. A peaceful sea of exquisite blue kissing these lovely sands with myriad dimples; and, from the land side soft emerald slopes, embroidered with silver threads of water, came to the very edge of the sands; so that, from all those glorious hues, that flecked the prismatic and sparkling sands, the eye of the voyagers passed at once to the vivid, yet sweet and soothing, green of Nature; and over this paradise, the

breeze they could no longer feel, wafted spicy but delicate odors from unseen trees.

Even Welch raised himself in the boat, and sniffed the heavenly air, and smiled at the heavenly spot. "Here's a blessed haven!" said he. "Down sail, and row her ashore."

CHAPTER XXIII.

They rowed more than a mile, so deep was the glorious bay; and then their oars struck the ground. But Hazel with the boat-hook propelled the boat gently over the pellucid water, that now seemed too shallow to float a canoe; and at last looked like the mere varnish of that picture, the prismatic sands below; yet still the little craft glided over it, till it gently grazed the soft sand, and was stationary. So placidly ended that terrible voyage.

Mr. Hazel and Miss Rolleston were on shore in a moment, and it was all they could do not to fall upon the land and kiss it.

Never had the sea disgorged upon that fairy isle such ghastly spectres. They looked, not like people about to die, but that had died, and been buried, and just come out of their graves to land on that blissful shore. *We* should have started back with horror; but the birds of that virgin isle merely stepped out of their way, and did not fly.

They had landed in paradise.

Even Welch yielded to that universal longing men have to embrace the land after perils at sea, and was putting his leg slowly over the gunwale, when Hazel came back to his assistance. He got ashore, but was contented to sit down with his eyes on the dimpled sea and the boat, waiting quietly till the tide should float his friend to his feet again.

The sea birds walked quietly about him, and minded him not.

Miss Rolleston ascended a green slope very slowly, for her limbs were cramped; and was lost to view.

Hazel now went up the beach, and took a more minute survey of the neighorhood.

The west side of the bay was varied. Half of it presented the soft character that marked the bay in general; but a portion of it was rocky, though streaked with vegetation, and this part was intersected by narrow clefts, into which, in some rare tempests and high tides combined, tongues of the sea had entered, licking the sides of the gullies smooth; and these occasional visits were marked by the sand, and broken shells, and other *débris* the tempestuous and encroaching sea had left behind.

The true high water mark was several feet lower than these *débris,* and was clearly marked. On the land above the cliffs he found a tangled jungle of tropical shrubs, into which he did not penetrate, but skirted it, and, walking eastward, came out upon a delicious down or grassy slope, that faced the centre of the bay. It was a gentleman's lawn of a thousand acres, with an extremely gentle slope from the centre of the island down to the sea.

A river flowing from some distant source ran eastward through this down, but at its verge, and almost encircled it. Hazel traversed the lawn until this river, taking a sudden turn towards the sea, intercepted him at a spot which he immediately fixed on as Helen Rolleston's future residence.

Four short, thick umbrageous trees stood close to the stream on this side, and on the eastern side was a grove of gigantic palm trees, at whose very ankles the river ran. Indeed, it had undermined one of these palm trees, and that giant at this moment lay all across the stream, leaving a gap through which Hazel's eye could pierce to a great depth among those grand columns; for they stood

wide apart, and there was not a vestige of brushwood, jungle, or even grass, below their enormous crowns. He christened the place St. Helen's on the spot.

He now dipped his baler into the stream and found it pure and tolerably cool.

He followed the bend of the stream; it evaded the slope and took him by its own milder descent to the sands: over these it flowed smooth as glass into the sea.

Hazel ran to Welch to tell him all he had discovered, and to give him his first water from the island.

He found a roan-colored pigeon, with a purplish neck, perched on the sick man's foot. The bird shone like a rainbow, and cocked a saucy eye at Hazel, and flew up into the air a few yards, but it soon appeared that fear had little to do with this movement; for, after an airy circle or two, he fanned Hazel's cheek with his fast flapping wings, and lighted on the very edge of the baler, and was for sipping.

"Oh, look here, Welch!" cried Hazel, in an ecstasy of delight.

"Ay, sir," said he. "Poor things, they han't a found us out yet."

The talking puzzled the bird, if it did not alarm him, and he flew up to the nearest tree, and perching there, inspected these new and noisy bipeds at his leisure.

Hazel now laid his hand on Welch's shoulder and reminded him gently they had a sad duty to perform, which could not be postponed.

"Right you are, sir," said Welch, "and very kind of you to let me have my way with him. Poor Sam!"

"I have found a place," said Hazel, in a low voice. "We can take the boat close to it. But where is Miss Rolleston?"

"Oh, she is not far off: she was here just now, and brought me this here little cocoanut, and patted me on

the back, she did, then off again on a cruise. Bless her little heart!"

Hazel and Welch then got into the boat, and pushed off without much difficulty, and punted across the bay to one of those clefts we have indicated. It was now nearly high water, and they moored the boat close under the cleft Hazel had selected.

Then they both got out and went up to the extremity of the cleft, and there, with the axe and with pieces of wood they found there, they scraped out a resting-place for Cooper. This was light work; for it was all stones, shells, fragments of coral, and dried sea-weed, lying loosely together. But now came a hard task in which Welch could not assist. Hazel unshipped a thwart, and laid the body on it: then by a great effort staggered with the burden up to the grave and deposited it. He was exhausted by the exertion, and had to sit down panting for some time. As soon as he was recovered, he told Welch to stand at the head of the grave, and he stood at the foot, bare-headed, and then from memory he repeated the service of our Church, hardly missing or displacing a word.

This was no tame recital; the scene, the circumstances, the very absence of the book, made it tender and solemn. And then Welch repeated those beautiful words after Hazel, and Hazel let him. And how did he repeat them? In such a hearty, loving tone, as became one who was about to follow, and all this but a short leave-taking. So uttered for the living as well as the dead, those immortal words had a strange significance and beauty.

And presently a tender, silvery voice came down to mingle with the deep and solemn tones of the male mourners. It was Helen Rolleston. She had watched most of their movements unseen herself, and now, stand-

ing at the edge of the ravine, and looking down on them, uttered a soft but thrilling amen to every prayer. When it was over, and the men prepared to fill in the grave, she spoke to Welch in an undertone, and begged leave to pay her tribute first; and with this, she detached her apron, and held it out to them. Hazel easily climbed up to her, and found her apron was full of sweet-smelling bark and aromatic leaves, whose fragrance filled the air.

"I want you to strew these over his poor remains," she said. "Oh, not common earth! He saved our lives. And his last words were, 'I love you, Tom.' Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!" And with that she gave him the apron, and turned her head away to hide her tears.

Hazel blessed her for the thought, which, indeed, none but a lady would have had; and Welch and he, with the tears in their eyes, strewed the spicy leaves first; and soon a ridge of shingle neatly bound with seaweed marked the sailor's grave.

Hazel's next care, and that a pressing one, was to provide shelter for the delicate girl and the sick man, whom circumstances had placed under his care. He told Miss Rolleston that Welch and he were going to cross the bay again, and would she be good enough to meet them at the bend of the river where she would find four trees? She nodded her head and took that road accordingly. Hazel rowed eastward across the bay, and it being now high water, he got the boat into the river itself near the edge of the shore, and, as this river had worn a channel, he contrived with the boat-hook to propel the boat up the stream, to an angle in the bank within forty yards of the four trees. He could get no farther, the stream being now not only shallow, but blocked here and there with great and rough fragments of stone. Hazel pushed the boat into the angle out of the current, and moored her fast. He and Welch then got ashore, and Miss

Rolleston was standing at the four trees. He went to her and said enthusiastically, "This is to be your house. Is it not a beautiful site?"

"Yes, it is a beautiful site, but — forgive me — I really don't see the house," was her reply.

"But you see the framework."

Helen looked all about, and then said ruefully, "I suppose I am blind, sir, or else you are dreaming, for I see nothing at all."

"Why, here's a roof ready made, and the frame of a wall. We have only to wattle a screen between these four uprights."

"Only to wattle a screen! But I don't know what wattling a screen is. Who does?"

"Why, you get some of the canes that grow a little farther up the river, and a certain long wiry grass I have marked down, and then you fix and weave till you make a screen from tree to tree; this could be patched with wet clay. I know where there is plenty of that. Meantime see what is done to our hands. The crown of this great palm tree lies at the southern aperture of your house, and blocks it entirely up: that will keep off the only cold wind, the south wind, from you to-night. Then look at these long, spiky leaves interlaced over your head. (These trees are screw pines.) There is a roof ready made. You must have another roof underneath that, but it will do for a day or two."

"But you will wattle the screen directly," said Helen. "Begin at once, please. I am anxious to see a screen wattled."

"Well," said Welch, who had joined them, "landsmen are queer folk, the best of 'em. Why, miss, it would take him a week to screen you with rushes and reeds, and them sort of weeds; and I'd do it in half an hour, if I was the Tom Welch I used to be. Why, there's

spare canvas enough in the boat to go between these four trees breast high, and then there's the foresel besides; the mainsel is all you and me shall want, sir."

"Oh, excuse me," said Miss Rolleston, "I will not be sheltered at the expense of my friends.

"Welch, you are a trump," said Hazel, and ran off for the spare canvas. He brought it, and the carpenter's basket of tools. They went to work, and Miss Rolleston insisted on taking part in it. Finding her so disposed, Hazel said that they had better divide their labors, since the time was short. Accordingly he took the axe and chopped off a great many scales of the palm tree and lighted a great fire between the trees, while the other two worked on the canvas.

"This is to dry the soil as well as cook our provisions," said he; "and now I must go and find food. Is there anything you fancy?" He turned his head from the fire he was lighting and addressed this question both to Welch and Miss Rolleston.

Miss Rolleston stared at this question, then smiled, and in the true spirit of a lady, said, "I think I should like a good large cocoanut, if you can find one." She felt sure there was no other eatable thing in the whole island.

"I wants a cabbage," said Welch, in a loud voice.

"Oh, Mr. Welch, we are not at home," said Miss Rolleston, blushing at the preposterous demand.

"No, miss, in Capericorn. Whereby we shan't have to pay nothing for this here cabbage. I'll tell ye, miss: when a sailor comes ashore he always goes in for green vegetables; for why, he has eaten so much junk and biscuit, nature sings out for greens. Me and my shipmates was paid off at Portsmouth last year, and six of us agreed to dine together and each order his dish. Blest if six boiled legs of mutton did not come up smoking hot;

three was with cabbage, and three with turmots. Mine was turmots. But them I don't ask so nigh the Line: don't ye go to think, because I'm sick, and the lady and you is so kind to me, and to him that is a-waiting outside them there shoals for me, as I'm onreasonable; turmots I wish you both and plenty of 'em, when some whaler gets driven out of her course and picks you up, and carries you into northern latitudes where turmots grow; but cabbage is my right, cabbage is my due, being paid off in a manner; for the ship is foundered and I'm ashore: cabbage I ask for, as a seaman that has done his duty, and a man that won't live to eat many more of 'em; and" (losing his temper), "if you are the man I take you for, you'll run and fetch me a cabbage fresh from the tree;" (recovering his temper), "I know I didn't ought to ax a parson to shin up a tree for me: but, Lord bless you, there ain't no sarcy little boys a-looking on, and here's a poor fellow mostly dying for it."

Miss Rolleston looked at Mr. Hazel with alarm in every feature; and whispered, "Cabbage from the tree. Is he wandering?"

Hazel smiled. "No," said he. "He has picked up a fable of these seas, that there is a tree which grows cabbages."

Welch heard him and said, with due warmth, "Of course there is a tree on all these islands, that grows cabbages; that was known a hundred years before you was born, and shipmates of mine have eaten them."

"Excuse me, what those old admirals and buccaneers, that set the legend afloat, were so absurd as to call a cabbage, and your shipmates may have eaten for one, is nothing on earth but the last year's growth of the palm-tree."

"Palm-tree be ——," said Welch: and thereupon en-

sued a hot argument, which Helen's good sense cut short.

"Mr. Hazel," said she, "can you by any possibility get our poor friend the *thing* he wants?"

"Oh, *that* is quite within the bounds of possibility," said Hazel, dryly.

"Well, then, suppose you begin by getting him the *thing*. Then I will boil the *thing*, and he will eat the *thing:* and after all that it will be time to argue about the *name* we shall give to the *thing*."

The good sense of this struck Mr. Hazel forcibly. He started off at once, armed with the axe, and a net bag Welch had made since he became unfit for heavy labor: he called back to them as he went, to put the pots on.

Welch and Miss Rolleston complied; and then the sailor showed the lady how to sew sailor-wise, driving the large needle with the palm of the hand, guarded by a piece of leather. They had nailed two breadths of canvas to the trees on the north and west sides, and run the breadths rapidly together; and the water was boiling and bubbling in the balers, when Miss Rolleston uttered a scream, for Hazel came running over the prostrate palm-tree as if it was a proper bridge, and lighted in the midst of them.

"Lot one," said he, cheerfully, and produced from his net some limes, two cocoa-nuts, and a land-turtle; from this last esculent Miss Rolleston withdrew with undisguised horror, and it was in vain he assured her it was a great delicacy.

"No matter: it is a reptile. Oh, please, send it away."

"The Queen of the Island reprieves you," said he, and put down the terrapin, which went off very leisurely for a reprieved reptile.

Then Hazel produced a fine bream, which he had found struggling in a rock-pool, the tide having turned,

and three sea crayfish, bigger than any lobster. He chopped their heads off outside, and threw their tails into the pots; he stuck a piece of pointed wood through the bream, and gave it to Welch to toast; but Welch waved it aside.

"I see no cabbage," said he, grimly.

"Oh, I forgot: but that is soon found," said Hazel. "Here, give me the fish, and you take the saw, and examine the head of this palm-tree, which lies at Miss Rolleston's door. Saw away the succulent part of last year's growth, and bring it here."

Welch got up slowly.

"I'll go with you, Mr. Welch," said Miss Rolleston.

She will not be alone with me for a moment, if she can help it, thought Hazel, and sat moody by the fire. But he shook off his sadness, and forced on a cheerful look the moment they came back. They brought with them a vegetable very like the heart of a cabbage, only longer and whiter.

"There," said Welch, "what d'ye call that?"

"The last year's growth of the palm," said Hazel, calmly.

This vegetable was cut in two, and put into the pots.

"There, take the toasting-fork again," said Hazel to Welch, and drew out from his net three huge scallop-shells. "Soup-plates," said he, and washed them in the running stream: then put them before the fire to dry.

While the fish and vegetable were cooking, he went and cut off some of the leafy, pinnated branches of the palm-tree, and fastened them horizontally above the strips of canvas. Each palm branch traversed a whole side of the bower. This closed the northern and western sides.

On the southern side, the prostrate palm-tree, on strik-

ing the ground, had so crushed its boughs and leaves together, as to make a thick wall of foliage.

Then he took to making forks; and primitive ones they were. He selected a bough the size of a thick walking stick; sawed it off the tree; sawed a piece six inches long off it, peeled that, split it in four, and, with his knife, gave each piece three points, by merely tapering off and serrating one end; and so he made a fork in a minute. Then he brought all the rugs and things from the boat, and, the ground being now thoroughly dried by the fire, placed them for seats; gave each person a large leaf for a plate, besides a scallop-shell; and served out supper. It was eaten with rare appetite; the palm-tree vegetable in particular was delicious, tasting between a cabbage and a cocoa-nut.

When they had supped, Hazel removed the plates and went to the boat. He returned, dragging the foremast and foresail, which were small, and called Welch out. They agreed to rig the mainsail tarpaulin-wise and sleep in the boat. Accordingly they made themselves very busy screening the east side of Miss Rolleston's new abode with the foresail, and fastened a loop and drove a nail into the tree, and looped the sail to it, then suddenly bade her good-night in cheerful tones, and were gone in a moment, leaving her to her repose as they imagined. Hazel in particular, having used all his ingenuity to secure her personal comfort, was now too bent on showing her the most delicate respect, and forbearance, to think of anything else. But, justly counting on the delicacy, he had forgotten the timidity of her sex, and her first night in the island was a terribly trying one.

Thrice she opened her mouth to call Welch and Hazel back, but could not. Yet when their footsteps were out of hearing she would have given the world to have them between her and the perils with which she felt herself surrounded.

Tigers; snakes; scorpions; savages! what would become of her during the long night?

She sat and cowered before the hot embers. She listened to what seemed the angry roar of the sea. What with the stillness of the night and her sharpened senses, she heard it all round the island. She seemed environed with peril, and yet surrounded by desolation. No one at hand to save her in time from a wild beast. No one anywhere near except a sick sailor, and one she would almost rather die than call singly to her aid, for he had once told her he loved her.

"Oh papa; oh Arthur!" she cried. "Are you praying for your poor Helen?" Then she wept and prayed; and half nerved herself to bear the worst. Finally her vague fears completely overmastered her. Then she had recourse to a stratagem that belongs to her sex — she hid herself from the danger, and the danger from her: she covered herself face and all, and so lay trembling, and longing for the day.

At the first streak of dawn she fled from her place of torture, and after plunging her face and hands in the river, which did her a world of good, she went off, and entered the jungle, and searched it closely, so far as she could penetrate it. Soon she heard "Miss Rolleston" called in anxious tones. But she tossed her little head, and revenged herself for her night of agony by not replying.

However, Nature took her in hand; imperious hunger drew her back to her late place of torture; and there she found a fire, and Hazel cooking crayfish. She ate the crayfish heartily, and drank cocoanut milk out of half a cocoanut, which the ingenious Hazel had already sawn, polished, and mounted for her.

After that, Hazel's whole day was occupied in stripping a tree that stood on the high western promontory of the

bay, and building up the materials of a bonfire a few yards from it, that if any whaler should stray that way, they might not be at a loss for means to attract her attention.

Welch was very ill all day, and Miss Rolleston nursed him. He got about towards evening, and Miss Rolleston asked him rather timidly if he could put her up a bell-rope.

"Why, yes, miss," said Welch, "that is easy enough; but I don't see no bell."

Oh, she did not want a bell — she only wanted a bell-rope.

Hazel came up during this conversation, and she then gave her reason.

"Because, then, if Mr. Welch is ill in the night and wants me, I could come to him. Or —" finding herself getting near the real reason, she stopped short.

"Or what?" inquired Hazel, eagerly.

She replied to Welch. "When tigers and things come to me, I can let you know, Mr. Welch — if you have any curiosity about the result of their visit."

"Tigers!" said Hazel, in answer to this side slap; "there are no tigers here; no large animals of prey exist in the Pacific."

"What makes you think that?"

"It is notorious: naturalists are agreed."

"But I am not. I heard noises all night. And little I expected that anything of me would be left this morning, except, perhaps, my back hair. Mr. Welch, you are clever at rigging things — that is what you call it — and so please rig me a bell-rope, then I shall not be eaten up alive, without creating some *little* disturbance."

"I'll do it, miss," said Welch, "this very night."

Hazel said nothing, but pondered. Accordingly, that very evening a piece of stout twine, with a stone at

the end of it, hung down from the roof of Helen's house; and this twine clove the air, until it reached a ring upon the mainmast of the cutter; thence it descended, and was to be made fast to something or somebody. The young lady inquired no further. The very sight of this bell-rope was a great comfort to her; it re-united her to civilized life.

That night she lay down, and quaked considerably less. Yet she woke several times; and an hour before daylight she heard distinctly a noise that made her flesh creep. It was like the snoring of some great animals. This horrible sound was faint and distant; but she heard it between the roll of the waves, and that showed it was not the sea roaring; she hid herself in her rugs, and cowered till daybreak. A score of times she was minded to pull her bell-rope; but always a womanly feeling, strong as her love of life, withheld her. "Time to pull that bell-rope when the danger is present or imminent," she thought to herself. "The thing will come smelling about before it attacks me, and then I will pull the bell;" and so she passed an hour of agony.

Next morning at daybreak, Hazel met her just issuing from her hut, and pointing to his net told her he was going to forage; and would she be good enough to make the fire and have boiling water ready; he was sorry to trouble her; but poor Welch was worse this morning. Miss Rolleston cut short his excuses. "Pray do not take me for a child; of course I will light the fire, and boil the water. Only I have no lucifer matches."

"Here is one," said he; "light it with great precaution. I have but nine. I carry them wrapped in oil-skin; for if anything happen to *them*, Heaven help us."

He crossed the prostrate palm-tree, and dived into the wood. It was a large beautiful wood, and except at the

western edge, the trees were all of the palm-tree genus, but contained several species, including the cocoanut tree. The turf ran under these trees for about forty yards, and then died gradually away under the same thick shade which destroyed all other vegetation in this wood, and made it so easy to see and travel.

He gathered a few cocoanuts that had burst out of their ripe pods and fallen to the ground; and ran on till he reached a belt of trees and shrubs, that bounded the palm forest. Here his progress was no longer easy: but he found trees covered with a small fruit resembling quinces in every particular, of look, taste, and smell, and that made him persevere, since it was most important to learn the useful products of the island. Presently he burst through some brushwood into a swampy bottom surrounded by low trees, and instantly a dozen large birds of the osprey kind rose flapping into the air like windmills rising. He was quite startled by the whirring and flapping, and not a little amazed at the appearance of the place. Here was a very charnel house; so thick lay the shells, skeletons, and loose bones of fish. Here, too, he found a terrapin killed, but not eaten: and also some fish, more or less pecked. "Aha! my worthy executioners, much obliged," said he: "you have saved me that job:" and into the bag went the terrapin, and two plump fish, but slightly mutilated. Before he had gone many yards, back came the sailing wings, and the birds settled again before his eyes. The rest of the low wood was but thin, and he soon emerged upon the open country: but it was most unpromising; and fitter for geese than men: a vast sedgy swamp with water in the middle, thin fringes of great fern-trees, and here and there a disconsolate tree like a weeping willow, and at the end of this lake and swamp which altogether formed a triangle, was a barren hill without a blade of vegeta-

tion on it, and a sort of jagged summit Hazel did not at all like the look of. Volcanic!

Somewhat dismayed at finding so large a slice of the island worthless, he returned through the wood guiding himself due west by his pocket compass, and so got down to the shore, where he found scallops and crayfish in incredible abundance. Literally he had only to go into the water and gather them. But "enough" is as good as "a feast." He ran to the pots with his miscellaneous bag, and was not received according to his deserts. Miss Rolleston told him a little severely, the water had been boiling a long time. Then he produced his provender, by way of excuse.

"Tortoises again!" said she, and shuddered visibly.

But the quinces and cocoanuts were graciously received. Welch, however, cried out for cabbage. "What am I to do?" said Hazel. "For every such cabbage, a king must die."

"Goodness me!"

"A monarch of the grove."

"Oh, a King Log. Why, then, down with them all, of course: sooner than dear Mr. Welch should go without his cabbage."

He cast a look of admiration on her, which she avoided, and very soon his axe was heard ringing in the wood hard by. Then came a loud crash. Then another. Hazel came running with the cabbage, and a cocoa pod. "There," said he, "and there are a hundred more about. Whilst you cook that for Welch, I will store them." Accordingly he returned to the wood with his net, and soon came back with five pods in it, each as big as a large pumpkin.

He chucked these one at a time across the river, and then went for more. It took him all the afternoon to get all the pods across the river. He was obliged to sit down and rest.

But a suggestion of Helen's soon set him to work again.

"You were kind enough to say you would store these for me. Could you not store them so as to wall out those terrible beasts with them?"

"What terrible beasts?"

"That roar so all night, and don't eat us, only because they have not found out we are here yet. But they will."

"I deny their existence," said Hazel; "but I'll wall them out all the same," said he.

"Pray do," said Helen. "Wall them out first, and disprove them afterwards; I shall be better able to believe they don't exist, when they are well walled out — much."

Hazel went to work, and, with her assistance, laid cocoa-pods, two wide and three deep, outside the northern and western side of her leafy bower, and he promised to complete the walls by the same means.

They all then supped together, and, to oblige him, she ate a little of the terrapin, and when they parted for the night, she thanked him and said, with a deep blush, "You have been a good friend to me — of late."

He colored high, and his eyes sparkled with delight; and she noticed, and almost wished she had kept her gratitude to herself.

That night, what with her bell-rope and her little bit of a wall, she was somewhat less timorous, and went to sleep early.

But even in sleep she was watchful, and she was awakened by a slight sound in the neighborhood of the boat.

She lay watching, but did not stir.

Presently she heard a footstep.

With a stifled cry she bounded up, and her first

impulse was to rush out of the tent. But she conquered this, and gliding to the south side of her bower, she peered through the palm-leaves, and the first thing she saw was the figure of a man standing between her and the boat.

She drew her breath hard. The outline of the man was somewhat indistinct. But it was not a savage: the man was clothed; and his stature betrayed him.

He stood still for some time. "He is listening to see if I am awake," said Helen, to herself.

The figure moved towards her bower.

Then all in a moment she became another woman. She did not rely on her bell-rope; she felt it was fast to nothing that could help her. She looked round for no weapon; she trusted to herself. She drew herself hastily up, and folded her arms; her bosom panted, but her cheek never paled. Her modesty was alarmed; her blood was up, and life or death was nothing to her.

The footsteps came nearer; they stopped at her door; they went north; they came back south. They kept her in this high-wrought attitude for half an hour. Then they retired softly; and when they were gone, she gave way, and fell on her knees, and began to cry hysterically. Then she got calmer, and then she wondered, and puzzled herself; but she slept no more that night.

In the morning she found that the fire was lighted on a sort of shelf close to the boat. Mr. Hazel had cut the shelf and lighted the fire there for Welch's sake, who had complained of cold in the night.

Whilst Hazel was gone for the crayfish, Welch asked Helen to go for her prayer-book. She brought it directly, and turned the leaves to find the prayers for the sick. But she was soon undeceived as to his intention.

"Sam had it wrote down how the Proserpine was foundered, and I should like to lie alongside my mess-

mate on that there paper, as well as in t'other place" (meaning the grave). "Begin as Sam did, that this is my last word."

"Oh, I hope not. Oh, Mr. Welch, pray do not leave me!"

"Well, well, then, never mind that; but just put down as I heard Sam; and his dying words, that the parson took down, were the truth."

"I have written that."

"And that the two holes was on her port-side, and seven foot from her starn-post; and *I* say them very augers, that is in our cutter, made them holes. Set down that."

"It is down."

"Then I'll put my mark under it; and you are my witness."

Helen, anxious to please him in everything, showed him where to put his mark. He did so; and she signed her name as his witness.

"And now, Mr. Welch," said she, "do not you fret about the loss of the ship; you should rather think how good Providence has been to us in saving us three out of so many that sailed in that poor ship. That Wylie was a wicked man; but he is drowned, or starved, no doubt, and there is an end of him. You are alive, and we are all three to see Old England again. But to live, you must eat; and so now do pray make a good breakfast to-day. Tell me what you can fancy. A cabbage?"

"What! you own it is a cabbage?"

"Of course I do," said Helen, coaxing. "You must excuse Mr. Hazel; these learned men are so crotchety in some things, and go by books; but you and I go by our senses, and to us a cabbage is a cabbage, grow where it will. Will you have one?"

"No, miss, not this morning. What I wants this

morning very bad, indeed, it is — I wants a drink made of them sweet-smelling leaves, like as you strewed over my messmate — the Lord in heaven bless you for it."

"Oh, Mr. Welch! that is a curious fancy: but you shall not ask me twice for anything; the jungle is full of them, and I'll fetch you some in five minutes. So you must boil the water."

She scudded away to the jungle, and soon returned with some aromatic leaves. Whilst they were infusing, Hazel came up, and on being informed of Welch's fancy, made no opposition; but, on the contrary, said that such men had sometimes very happy inspirations. He tasted it, however, and said the smell was the best part of it in his opinion. He then put it aside to cool for the sick man's use.

They ate their usual breakfast, and then Welch sipped his spice tea, as he called it. Morning and afternoon he drank copious draughts of it, and seemed to get suddenly better, and told them not to hang about him any longer, but go to their work: he was all right now.

To humor him they went off in different directions: Hazel with his axe to level cocoanut-trees, and Helen to search for fruits in the jungle.

She came back in about an hour, very proud of some pods she had found with nutmegs inside them. She ran to Welch. He was not in the boat. She saw his waistcoat, however, folded and lying on the thwart; so she knew he could not be far off, and concluded he was in her bower. But he was not there, and she called to Mr. Hazel. He came to the side of the river laden with cocoa-nuts.

"Is he with you?" said Helen.

"Who? Welch? no."

"Well, then, he is not here. Oh, dear! something is the matter."

Hazel came across, directly. And they both began to run anxiously to every part whence they could command a view to any distance.

They could not see him anywhere, and met, with blank faces, at the bower.

Then Helen made a discovery.

This very day, while hanging about the place, Hazel had torn up from the edge of the river an old trunk, whose roots had been loosened by the water washing away the earth that held them, and this stump he had set up in her bower for a table, after sawing the roots down into legs. Well, on the smooth part of this table, lay a little pile of money, a ring with a large pearl in it, and two gold ear-rings Helen had often noticed in Welch's ears.

She pointed at these and turned pale. Then suddenly waving her hand to Hazel to follow her, she darted out of the bower, and, in a moment, she was at the boat.

There she found, beside his waistcoat, his knife, and a little pile of money placed carefully on the thwart; and, underneath it, his jacket rolled up, and his shoes and sailor's cap, all put neatly and in order.

Hazel found her looking at them. He began to have vague misgivings. "What does this mean?" he said, faintly.

"'What does it mean!'" cried Helen, in agony. "Don't you see? A legacy! The poor thing has divided his little all. Oh, my heart! What has become of him?" Then, with one of those inspirations her sex have, she cried, "Ah! Cooper's grave!"

Hazel, though not so quick as she was, caught her meaning at a word, and flew down the slope to the seashore. The tide was out: a long irregular track of footsteps indented the sand. He stopped a moment and looked at them: they pointed towards the cleft where

the grave was. He followed them all across the sand. They entered the cleft, and did not return. Full of heavy foreboding, he rushed into the cleft.

Yes: his arms hanging on each side of the grave, and his cheek laid gently on it, there lay Tom Welch, with a loving smile on his dead face. Only a man: yet faithful as a dog.

Hazel went back slowly, and crying. Of all men living, he could best appreciate fidelity; and mourn its fate.

But, as he drew near Helen, he dried his eyes; for it was his duty to comfort her.

She had at first endeavored to follow him; but after a few steps her knees smote together, and she was fain to sit down on the grassy slope that overlooked the sea.

The sun was setting huge and red over that vast and peaceful expanse.

She put her hands to her head, and sick at heart, looked heavily at that glorious and peaceful sight. Hazel came up to her. She looked at his face, and that look was enough for her. She rocked herself gently to and fro.

"Yes," said he in a broken voice. "He was there — Quite dead."

He sat gently down by her side, and looked at that setting sun and illimitable ocean, and his heart felt deadly sad. "He is gone — and we are alone — on this island."

The man said this in one sense only; but the woman heard it in two.

ALONE!

She glanced timidly round at him, and without rising, edged a little way from him, and wept in silence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

After a long silence, Hazel asked her in a low voice if she could be there in half an hour. She said yes, in the same tone, but without turning her head. On reaching the graves, she found that Hazel had spared her a sad sight; nothing remained but to perform the service. When it was over she went slowly away in deep distress on more accounts than one. In due course Hazel came to her bower, but she was not there. Then he lighted the fire, and prepared everything for supper; and he was so busy, and her foot so light, he did not hear her come. But, by and by, lifting his head, he saw her looking wistfully at him, as if she would read his soul in his minutest actions. He started and brightened all over with pleasure at the sudden sight of her, and said eagerly, "Your supper is quite ready."

"Thank you, sir," said she, sadly and coldly (she had noted that expression of joy), "I have no appetite; do not wait for me." And soon after strolled away again.

Hazel was dumfounded. There was now no mistaking her manner; it was chilly and reserved all of a sudden. It wounded him; but he behaved like a man. What! I keep her out of her own house, do I? said he to himself. He started up, took a fish out of the pot, wrapped it in a leaf, and stalked off to his boat. Then he ate a little of the fish, threw the rest away, and went down upon the sands, and paced them in a sad and bitter mood.

But the night calmed him, and some hours of tranquil thought brought him fortitude, patience, and a clearer

understanding. He went to his boat, elevated by generous and delicate resolutions. Now, worthy resolves are tranquillizing, and he slept profoundly.

Not so she, whose sudden but very natural change of demeanor had hurt him. When she returned and found he was gone for the night, she began to be afraid she had offended him. For this and other reasons she passed the night in sore perplexity, and did not sleep till morning; and so she overslept her usual time. However, when she was up, she determined to find her own breakfast; she felt it would not do to be too dependent, and on a person of uncertain humor; such for the moment she chose to pretend to herself was Hazel. Accordingly she went down to the sea to look for crayfish. She found abundance. There they lay in the water; you had but to stoop and pick them up.

But alas! they were black, lively, viperish; she went with no great relish for the task to take one up; it wriggled maliciously: she dropped it, and at that very moment, by a curious coincidence, remembered she was sick and tired of crayfish; she would breakfast on fruits. She crossed the sand, took off her shoes, and paddled through the river, and, having put on her shoes again, was about to walk up through some rank grass to the big wood, when she heard a voice behind her, and it was Mr. Hazel. She bit her lip (it was broad daylight now), and prepared quietly to discourage this excessive assiduity. He came up to her panting a little, and taking off his hat, said, with marked respect, "I beg your pardon, Miss Rolleston, but I know you hate reptiles; now there are a few snakes in that long grass: not poisonous ones."

"Snakes!" cried Helen; "let me get home: there — I'll go without my breakfast."

"Oh, I hope not," said Hazel, ruefully; "why, I have

been rather fortunate this morning, and it is all ready."

"That is a different thing," said Helen, graciously; "you shall not have your trouble for nothing."

Directly after breakfast, Hazel took his axe and some rope from the boat, and went off in a great hurry to the jungle. In half an hour or so, he returned, dragging a large conical shrub, armed with spikes for leaves, incredibly dense and prickly.

"There," said he, "there's a vegetable porcupine for you. This is your best defence against that roaring bugbear."

"That little tree," said Helen; "the tiger would soon jump over that."

"Ay, but not over this and sixty more; a wall of stilettos. Don't touch it, please."

He worked very hard all day, and raised a low rampart of those prickly trees; but it only went round two sides and a half of the bower. So then he said he had failed again; and lay down worn out by fatigue.

Helen Rolleston, though dejected herself, could not help pitying him for his exhaustion in her service, and for his bleeding hands; she undertook the cooking, and urged him kindly to eat of every dish; and when he rose to go, she thanked him with as much feeling as modesty for the great pains he had taken to lessen those fears of hers, which she saw he did not share.

These kind words more than repaid him. He went to his little den in a glow of spirits; and the next morning went off in a violent hurry, and, for once, seemed glad to get away from her.

"Poor Mr. Hazel," said she, softly, and watched him out of sight. Then she went to the high point where he had barked a tree; and looked far and wide for a sail. The air was wonderfully clear; the whole ocean seemed in sight: but all was blank.

A great awe fell upon her, and sickness of heart; and then first she began to fear she was out of the known world, and might die on that island; or never be found by the present generation: and this sickening fear lurked in her from that hour, and led to consequences which will be related shortly.

She did not return for a long while, and when she did, she found Hazel had completed her fortifications. He invited her to explore the western part of the island, but she declined.

"Thank you," said she, "not to-day; there is something to be done at home. I have been comparing my abode with yours, and the contrast makes me uncomfortable, if it doesn't you. Oblige me by building yourself a house."

"What, in an afternoon?"

"Well, at all events, you must roof the boat, or something. There, I'll sit by and — what shall I do, whilst you are working to oblige me?"

Hazel reflected a minute, and then asked her if she could plait. She said she could as far as five strands.

"And net, of course?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then, if you will make a fishing-net of cocoa-nut fibre, I will soon give myself all the shelter a healthy man requires in this climate."

The boat lay in a little triangular creek; the surrounding earth was alluvial clay; a sort of black cheesy mould, stiff, but kindly to work. Hazel contrived to cut and chisel it out with a clumsy wooden spade he had made, and, throwing it to the sides, raised, by degrees, two mud banks, one on each side the boat, and at last he dug so deep that he was enabled to draw the boat another yard inland.

As Helen sat by, netting, and forcing a smile now and

then though sad at heart, he was on his mettle, and the mud walls rose rapidly. He squared their inner sides with the spade. When he had done, the boat lay in a hollow, the walls of which, half natural, half artificial, were five feet above her gunwale, and, of course, eight feet above her bottom, in which Hazel used to lie at night. He then laid the mainsail across so as to roof the stern part of the boat, and put four heavy stones on it, lest a sudden gust of wind might lift it.

Helen said it was all very clever, but she doubted whether it would keep out much rain.

"More than yours will," said Hazel, "and that is a very serious thing. In your state of health a wetting might be fatal. But to-morrow, if you please, I will examine our resources, and lay our whole situation before you, and ask your advice."

Next morning he kept his word, and laid their case before her.

He said, "We are here on an island that has probably been seen, and disregarded, by a few whalers, but is not known to navigators, nor down on any chart. There is a wide range of vegetation, proving a delightful climate on the whole and one particularly suited to you, whose lungs are delicate. But then, comparing the beds of the rivers with the banks, a tremendous fall of rain is indicated. The rainy months (in these latitudes) are at hand, and if those rains catch us in our present condition, it will be a calamity. You have no roof to keep it out. I tremble when I think of it. This is my main anxiety. My next is about our sustenance during the rains; we have no stores under cover: no fuel, no provisions, but a few cocoa-nuts. We use two lucifer matches a day; and what is to become of us at that rate? In theory, fire can be got by rubbing two pieces of wood together, — Selkirk is said to have so obtained it from pimento wood on Juan

Fernandez; but in fact, I believe, the art is confined to savages. I never met a civilized man who could do it, and I have questioned scores of voyagers. As for my weapons, they consist of a boat-hook and an axe; no gun, no harpoon, no bow, no lance. My tools are a blunt saw, a blunter axe, a wooden spade, two great augers, — that, I believe, had a hand in bringing us here, but have not been any use to us since, — a centre-bit, two planes, a hammer, a pair of pincers, two bradawls, three gimlets, two scrapers, a plumb-lead and line, a large pair of scissors, — and you have a small pair, — two gauges, a screw-driver, five clasp knives, a few screws and nails of various sizes, two small barrels, two bags, two tin bowls, two wooden bowls, and the shell of a turtle, whose skeleton I found on the shore, and that is a very good soup tureen, only we have no meat to make soup with."

"Well, sir," said Miss Rolleston resignedly, "we can but kneel down and die."

"That would be cutting the Gordian knot, indeed," said Hazel. "What! die to shirk a few difficulties? No. I have three propositions to lay before you. 1st, That I hereby give up walking and take to running, time is so precious. 2d, That we both work by night as well as day. 3d, That we each tell the other our principal wants, so that there may be four eyes on the look-out, as we go, instead of two."

"I consent," said Helen. "Pray what are your wants?"

"Iron, oil, salt, tar, a bellows, a pickaxe, thread, nets, light matting for roofs, bricks, chimney-pots, jars, glass, animal food, some variety of vegetable food, and so on. Now tell me *your* wants."

"Well, I want — impossibilities."

"Enumerate them."

"What is the use?"

"It is the method we have agreed upon."

"Oh, very well, then. I want — a sponge."

"Good. What next?"

"I have broken my comb."

"Good."

"I'm glad you think so. I want — oh, Mr. Hazel, what *is* the use? — well, I want a looking-glass."

"Great Heavens! What for?"

"Oh, never mind, I want one; and some more towels, and some soap, and a few hair-pins, and some elastic bands, and some pens, ink, and paper, to write my feelings down in this island for nobody ever to see."

When she began Hazel looked bright, but the list was like a wasp, its sting lay in its tail. However, he put a good face on it. "I'll try and get you all those things, only give me time. Do you know, I am writing a dictionary on a novel method."

"That means on the sand."

"No; the work is suspended for the present. But two of the definitions in it are: DIFFICULTIES, things to be subdued; IMPOSSIBILITIES, things to be trampled on." And so he tried to keep her heart up.

She strolled towards the jungle; and he got his spade, and went post-haste to his clay-pit.

He made a quantity of bricks and tiles, and brought them home, and put them to dry in the sun. He then tried to make a large narrow-necked vessel, and failed utterly; so utterly that he lay down flat on his back and accepted failure for full twenty minutes. Then he got up and turned the dead failure into a great rude platter like a shallow milk-pan. Leaving all these to dry and set before he baked them, he went off to the marsh for fern leaves. He made several trips, and raised quite a stack of them. By this time the sun had operated on his thinner pottery; so he laid down six of his large thick tiles, and lighted a fire on them with dry banana

leaves, and cocoa-nut, etc., and such light combustibles, until he had heated and hardened the clay; then he put the ashes on one side, and swept the clay clean; then he put the fire on again, and made it hotter and hotter, till the clay began to redden.

While he was thus occupied, Miss Rolleston came from the jungle carrying vegetable treasures in her apron. First she produced some golden apples with reddish leaves.

"There," said she; "and they smell delicious."

Hazel eyed them keenly.

"You have not eaten any of them?"

"What! by myself?" said Helen.

"Thank Heaven!" said Hazel, turning pale. "These are the manchanilla, the poison apple of the Pacific."

"Poison!" said Helen, alarmed in her turn.

"Well, I don't *know* that they are poison; but travellers give them a very bad name. The birds never peck them, and I have read that even the leaves falling into still water have killed the fish. You will not eat anything here till you have shown it me, will you?" said he imploringly.

"No, no," said Helen, and sat down with her hand to her heart a minute. "And I was so pleased when I found them," she said; "they reminded me of home. I wonder whether these are poison, too?" and she opened her apron wide, and showed him some long yellow pods, with red specks, something like a very large banana.

"Ah, that is a very different affair," said Hazel delighted; "these are plantains, and the greatest find we have made yet. The fruit is meat, the wood is thread, and the leaf is shelter and clothes. The fruit is good raw, and better baked, as you shall see; and I believe this is the first time the dinner and the dish were both baked together."

He cleared the now heated hearth, put the meat and fruit on it, then placed his great platter over it, and heaped fire round the platter, and light combustibles over it. And, in a word, the platter and the dinner under it were both baked. Hazel removed the platter or milk-pan, and served the dinner in it.

A lady and gentleman cast upon a desert island must use their eyes, hands, and feet, in earnest, or die the death of fools. And the first week these two passed was, therefore, mainly characterized by hard work, and the invention that is the natural fruit of necessity. This it was our duty to show, or else give a thoroughly false picture of human life.

But, as to the manner of working, that varies greatly, according to the sentiments of the heart.

Helen Rolleston worked well and neatly. She invented but little: her execution of what she did was superior to Mr. Hazel's. She showed considerable tact in adapting new products to old purposes. She made as follows: —

1. Thick mattress, stuffed with vegetable hair and wool. The hair was a cypress moss dried, and the wool was the soft coating of the fern-trees. This mattress was made with plantain-leaves, sewed together with the thread furnished by the tree itself, and doubled at the edges.

2. A long shallow net — cocoa-fibre.

3. A great quantity of stout grass rope, and light but close matting for the roof.

But, while she worked, her mind was often far away, and her heart in a tumult of fear, trouble, shame, and perplexity, which increased rather than diminished as the days rolled by and brought no ship to the island. On the other hand, she was deeply grateful to Mr. Hazel — as well she might. But she found many little opportunities of showing that sentiment to him. That war of

sentiments which agitated her, as a lady affianced by her own consent to Arthur Wardlaw, she suppressed and hid from him as long as she could.

Now it is the nature of suppressed sentiments to accumulate force.

To Hazel, on the contrary, the feverish labor of the first three weeks was an unmixed joy. He was working, not only for the comfort, but the health, and even the life, of the lady he loved; a life she had herself despaired of not long ago.

These sentiments made his homeliest work poetical: it was in this spirit he heightened his own mud banks in the centre, and set up brick fireplaces with hearth and chimney, one on each side: and now did all the cooking; for he found the smoke from wood made Miss Rolleston cough. He also made a number of pigeon-holes in his mud-walls and lined them with clay. One of these he dried with fire, and made a pottery door to it, and there kept the lucifer box. He made a vast number of bricks, but did nothing with them. After several disheartening failures he made two large pots, and two great pans, that would all four bear fire under them, and in the pans he boiled sea water till it all evaporated and left him a sediment of salt. This was a great addition to their food, and he managed also to put by a little. But it was a slow and inefficient process.

But that was nothing compared to the zest with which he attacked the most important work of all, and the longest, — Helen's hut or bower. He had no experience or skill as a carpenter, but he had Love and Brains. He found sandstones, some harsh, some fine, with which he contrived to sharpen his axe and saw. He fixed some uprights between the four trees. He let stout horizontal bars into the trees, and bound them to the uprights with Helen's grass-rope. Smaller horizontal bars at intervals

kept the prickly ramparts from being driven in by a sudden gust. The canvas walls were removed, and the nails stored in a pigeon-hole, and a stout net-work substituted, to which huge plantain leaves were cunningly fastened with plantain thread. The roof was double: first that extraordinary mass of spiked leaves which the four trees threw out, then, several feet under that, the huge piece of matting the pair had made. This was strengthened by double strips of canvas at the edges and in the centre, and by single strips in other parts. A great many cords and strings made of that long silky grass peculiar to the island were sewn to the canvas-strengthened edges, and so it was fastened to the trees, and to the horizontal bars.

When this work drew close to its completion, there came a new disappointment. He had the mortification of seeing that she for whom it was all done did not share his complacency.

The strife of sentiments in her mind seemed to be undermining her self-command, and, at times, even her good-breeding. She often let her work fall, and brooded for hours. She spoke sometimes fretfully, and the next moment with a slight excess of civility. She wandered away from him, and from his labors for her comfort, and passed hours at Telegraph Point, eying the illimitable ocean. She was a riddle. All sweetness at times, but at others irritable, moody, and scarce mistress of herself. Hazel was sorry and perplexed, and often expressed a fear she was ill. She always replied in the negative, and the next moment her eyes would fill with tears. The truth is, she was in considerable irritation of body, and a sort of mental distress which, perhaps, only the more sensitive of her own sex can fully appreciate.

Matters were still in this uncomfortable and mysterious state when Hazel put his finishing stroke to her abode.

He was in high spirits that evening: for he had made a discovery; he had at last found time for a walk, and followed the river to its source, a very remarkable lake in a hilly basin. And making further researches, he had found at the bottom of a rocky ravine a curious thing, a dark resinous fluid bubbling up in quite a fountain, which, however, fell down again as it rose, and hardly any overflowed. It was like thin pitch.

Of course in another hour he was back there with a great pot, and half filled it. Pursuing his researches a little farther he found a range of rocks with snowy summits apparently; but the snow was the guano of centuries. He was in a great hurry to get home with his pot of pitch; for it was in truth a very remarkable discovery, though not without a parallel. He could not wait till morning, so with embers and cocoa-nut he made a fire just outside the bower, and melted his pitch, which had become nearly solid, and proceeded to smear the inside of the matting in places, to make it thoroughly water-tight.

Helen treated the discovery at first with mortifying indifference; but he hoped she would appreciate Nature's bounty more, when she saw the practical use of this extraordinary production. He endeavored to lead her to that view. She shook her head sorrowfully. He persisted. She met him with silence. He thought this peevish, and ungrateful to Heaven; we have all different measures of the wonderful; and to him a fountain of pitch was thing to admire greatly and thank God for: he said as much.

To Helen it was nasty stuff, and who cared where it came from? She conveyed as much by a shrug of the shoulders, and then gave a sigh that told her mind was far away.

He was a little mortified, and showed it.

One word led to another, and at last what had been long fermenting came out.

"Mr. Hazel," said Miss Rolleston, "you and I are at cross purposes. You mean to live here. I do not."

Hazel left off working and looked greatly perplexed; the attack was so sudden in its form, though it had been a long time threatening. He found nothing to say, and she was impatient now to speak her mind, so she replied to his look.

"You are making yourself at home here. You are contented. Contented? You are *happy* in this horrible prison."

"And why not?" said Hazel. — But he looked rather guilty. — "Here are no traitors; no murderers. The animals are my friends, and the one human being I see make me better to look at her."

"Mr. Hazel, I am in a state of mind that romance jars on me. Be honest with me, and talk to me like a man. I say that you beam all over with happiness and content, and that you — now answer me one question; why have you never lighted the bonfire on Telegraph Point?"

"Indeed, I don't know," said he, submissively. "I have been so occupied."

"You have: and how? Not in trying to deliver us both from this dreadful situation, but to reconcile me to it. Yes, sir, under pretence (that is a harsh word, but I can't help it) of keeping out the rain. Your rain is a *bugbear*. It never rains, it never will rain. You are killing yourself almost, to make me comfortable in this place. Comfortable?" She began to writhe and pant, with excitement long restrained. "And do you really suppose you can make me live on like this, by building me a nice hut? Do you think I am all body and no soul, that shelter and warmth and enough to eat can keep my heart from breaking, and my cheeks from

blushing night and day? When I wake in the morning I find myself blushing to my fingers' ends." Then she writhed away from him. "Oh, my dear father, why did I ever leave you!" Then she writhed back. "Keep me here? make me live months and years on this island? Have you sisters? Have you a mother? Ask yourself is it likely? No; if you will not help me, and they don't love me enough to come and find me and take me home, I'll go to another home without your help or any man's." She rose suddenly to her feet. "I'll tie my clothes tight round me, and fling myself down from that point on the sharp rocks below. I'll find a way from this place to Heaven, if there's no way from it to those I love on earth."

Then she sank down and rocked herself and sobbed hard.

The strong passion of this hitherto gentle creature quite frightened her unhappy friend, who knew more of books than women. He longed to soothe her and comfort her; but what could he say? He cried out in despair, "My God, can I do nothing for her?"

She turned on him like lightning. "You can do anything: everything. You can restore us both to our friends. You can save my life, my reason. For that will go first, I think. What *had* I done? what had I *ever* done since I was born, to be so brought down? Was ever an English lady — ?" And with that her white teeth clicked together convulsively. "Do!" said she, darting back to the point as swiftly as she had rushed away from it. "Why, put down that; and leave off inventing fifty little trumpery things for me, and do one great thing instead. Oh, do not fritter that great mind of yours away in painting and patching my prison; but bring it all to bear on getting me *out* of my prison. Call sea and land to our rescue. Let them know a poor girl

is here in unheard-of, unfathomable misery: here, in the middle of this awful ocean."

Hazel sighed deeply. "No ships seem to pass within sight of us," he muttered.

"What does that matter to *you?* You are not a common man; you are an inventor. Rouse all the powers of your mind. There must be some way. Think for me. THINK! THINK! — or my blood will be on your head."

Hazel turned pale and put his head in his hands, and tried to think.

She leaned towards him with great flashing eyes of purest hazel.

The problem dropped from his lips a syllable at a time. "To diffuse — intelligence — a hundred leagues from a fixed point — an island?"

She leaned towards him with flashing expectant eyes.

But he groaned and said, "That seems impossible."

"Then *trample* on it," said she, bringing his own words against him; for she used to remember all he said to her in the day, and ponder it at night. "Trample on it, subdue it, or never speak to me again. Ah, I am an ungrateful wretch to speak harshly to you. It is my misery, not me. Good, kind, Mr. Hazel, O pray, pray, pray, bring all the powers of that great mind to bear on this one thing, and save a poor girl, to whom you have been so kind, so considerate, so noble, so delicate, so forbearing; now save me from despair!"

Hysterical sobs cut her short here, and Hazel, whose loving heart she had almost torn out of his body, could only falter out in a broken voice, that he would obey her. "I'll work no more for you at present," said he, "sweet as it has been. I will think instead. I will go this moment beneath the stars and think all night."

The young woman was now leaning her head languidly

back against one of the trees, weak as water after her passion. He cast a look of ineffable love and pity on her, and withdrew slowly to think beneath the tranquil stars.

Love has set men hard tasks in his time. Whether this was a light one, our readers shall decide.

To DIFFUSE INTELLIGENCE FROM A FIXED ISLAND OVER A HUNDRED LEAGUES OF OCEAN.

CHAPTER XXV.

The perplexity into which Hazel was thrown by the outburst of his companion, rendered him unable to reduce her demand at once to an intelligible form. For some moments he seriously employed his mind on the problem until it assumed this shape.

Firstly: I do not know where this island is, having no means of ascertaining either its latitude or longitude.

Secondly: if I had such a description of its locality, how might the news be conveyed beyond the limits of the place?

As the wildness of Helen's demand broke upon his mind, he smiled sadly, and sat down upon the bank of the little river, near his boat-house, and buried his head in his hands. Presently he heard a soft rustle near him; and looked up. To his surprise, she stood beside him.

"Mr. Hazel," she said, hurriedly — her voice was husky, — "do not mind what I have said. I am unreasonable; and I am sure I ought to feel obliged to you for all the — "

Hazel tried to check the utterance of her apology; but, ere he could master his voice, the girl's cold and constrained features seemed to melt. She turned away, wrung her hands, and, with a sharp, quivering cry, she broke forth, —

"Oh, sir! oh, Mr. Hazel! do forgive me. I am not ungrateful, indeed, indeed, I am not; but I am mad with despair. Judge me with compassion. At this moment, those who are very, very dear to me are awaiting my arrival in London; and when they learn the loss of the

Proserpine, how great will be their misery! Well, that misery is added to mine. Then my poor papa: he will never know how much he loved me until this news reaches him. And to think that I am dead to them, yet living! living here helplessly, helplessly. Dear, dear Arthur, how you will suffer for my sake. Oh, papa, papa! shall I never see you again?" and she wept bitterly.

"I am helpless either to aid or to console you, Miss Rolleston. By the act of a Divine Providence, you were cast upon this desolate shore, and by the same Will I was appointed to serve and to provide for your welfare. I pray God that He will give me health and strength to assist you."

She looked timidly at him for a moment, then slowly regained her hut. He had spoken coldly, and with dignity. She felt humbled, the more so, that he had only bowed his acknowledgment to her apology.

For more than an hour she watched him, as he paced up and down between the boat-house and the shore; then she shrank into her bed, after gently closing the door.

The following morning Helen was surprised to see the boat riding at anchor in the surf, and Hazel busily engaged on her trim. He was soon on shore, and by her side.

"I am afraid I must leave you for a day, Miss Rolleston," he said. "I wish to make a circuit of the island; indeed, I ought to have done so many days ago."

"Is such an expedition necessary? Surely you have had enough of the sea."

"It is very necessary. It is the first step towards announcing to all passing vessels our presence in this place. I have commenced operations already. See, on yonder bluff, which I have called Telegraph Point, I have mounted the boat's ensign, and now it floats from the top

of the tree beside the bonfire. Do you see that pole I have shipped on board the boat? that is intended as a signal, which shall be exhibited on your great palm-tree. The flag will then stand for a signal on the northern coast, and the palm-tree, thus accoutred, will serve for a similar purpose on the western extremity of the island. As I pass along the southern and eastern shores, I propose to select spots where some mark can be erected, such as may be visible to ships at sea."

"But will they remark such signals?"

"Be assured they will, if they come within sight of the place."

Hazel knew that there was little chance of such an event; but it was something not to be neglected.

Helen felt rather disappointed that no trace of the emotion he displayed on the previous night remained in his manner, or in the expression of his face. She bowed her permission to him rather haughtily, and sat down to breakfast on some baked yams, and some rough oysters, which he had raked up from the bay while bathing that morning. The young man had regained an elasticity of bearing, an independence of tone, to which she was not at all accustomed; his manners were always soft and deferential; but his expression was more firm, and she felt that the reins had been gently removed from her possession, and there was a will to guide her which she was bound to acknowledge and obey.

She did not argue in this wise, for it is not human to reason and to feel at the same moment. But she felt instinctively that the man was quietly asserting his superiority, and the result will appear.

Hazel went about his work briskly; the boat was soon laden with every requisite. Helen watched these preparations askance, vexed with the expedition which she had urged him to make. Then she fell to reflecting on the

change that seemed to have taken place in her character; she, who was once so womanly, so firm, so reasonable — why had she become so petulant, childish, and capricious?

The sail was set, and all ready to run the cutter into the surf of the rising tide, when, taking a sudden resolution, as it were, Helen came rapidly down, and said, "I will go with you, if you please," half in command, half in doubt. Hazel looked a little surprised, but very pleased; and then she added, "I hope I shall not be in your way."

He assured her, on the contrary, that she might be of great assistance to him; and now, with doubled alacrity, he ran out the little vessel and leaped into the prow as she danced over the waves. He taught her how to bring the boat's head round with the help of an oar, and when all was snug, left her at the helm. The wind being southerly, he had decided to pass to the west, and so they opened the sea about half a mile from the shore.

For about three miles it consisted of a line of bluffs, cleft at intervals by small narrow bays, the precipitous sides of which were lined with dense foliage. Into these fissures the sea entered with a mournful sound, that died away as it crept up the yellow sands with which these nooks were carpeted. An exclamation from Helen attracted his attention to the horizon on the north-west, where a long line of breakers glittered in the sun. A reef or low sandy bay appeared to exist in that direction about fifteen miles away, and something more than a mile in length. As they proceeded, he marked roughly on the side of his tin baler, with the point of a pin borrowed from Helen, the form of the coast line.

An hour and a half brought them to the north-western extremity of the island. As they cleared the shelter of the land, the southerly breeze coming with some force

across the open sea caught the cutter, and she lay over in a way to inspire Helen with alarm; she was about to let go the tiller, when Hazel seized it, accidentally enclosing her hand under the grasp of his own, as he pressed the tiller hard to port.

"Steady, please; don't relinquish your hold: it is all right — no fear," he cried, as he kept his eye on their sail.

He held this course for a mile or more, and then judging that with a long tack he could weather the southerly side of the island, he put the boat about. He took occasion to explain to Helen how this operation was necessary, and she learned the alphabet of navigation. The western end of their little land now lay before them; it was about three miles in breadth. For two miles the bluff coast line continued unbroken; then a deep bay, a mile in width and two miles in depth, was made by a long tongue of sand projecting westerly; on its extremity grew the gigantic palm, well recognized as Helen's landmark. The sandy shore was dotted with multitudes of dark objects. Ere long, these objects were seen to be in motion, and, pointing them out to Helen, with a smile, Hazel said: "Beware, Miss Rolleston, yonder are your bugbears — and in some force too. Those dark masses, moving upon the hillocks of sand, or rolling on the surf, are sea-lions — the *phoca leonina*, or lion-seal."

Helen strained her eyes to distinguish the forms, but only descried the dingy objects. While thus engaged, she allowed the cutter to fall off a little, and, ere Hazel had resumed his hold upon the tiller, they were fairly in the bay; the great palm-tree on their starboard bow.

"You seem determined to make the acquaintance of your nightmares," he remarked; "you perceive that we are embayed."

At this moment, something dark bulged up close beside

her in the sea, and the rounded back of a monster rolled over and disappeared. Hazel let drop the sail, for they were now fairly in the smooth water of the bay, and close to the sandy spit; the gigantic stem of the palm-tree was on their quarter, about half a mile off.

He took to the oars, and rowed slowly towards the shore. A small seal rose behind the boat and followed them, playing with the blade, its gambols resembling that of a kitten. He pointed out to Helen the mild expression of the creature's face, and assured her that all this tribe were harmless animals, and susceptible of domestication. The cub swam up to the boat quite fearlessly, and he touched its head gently; he encouraged her to do the like, but she shrank from its contact. They were now close ashore, and Hazel, throwing out his anchor in two feet of water, prepared to land the beam of wood he had brought to decorate the palm-tree as a signal.

The huge stick was soon heaved overboard, and he leaped after it. He towed it to the nearest landing to the tree, and dragged it high up on shore. Scarcely had he disposed it conveniently, intending to return in a day or two, with the means of affixing it in a prominent and remarkable manner, in the form of a spar across the trunk of the palm, when a cry from Helen recalled him. A large number of the sea-lions were coasting quietly down the surf towards the boat; indeed, a dozen of them had made their appearance around it.

Hazel shouted to her not to fear, and desiring that her alarm should not spread to the swarm, he passed back quietly but rapidly. When he reached the water, three or four of the animals were already floundering between him and the boat. He waded slowly towards one of them, and stood beside it. The man and the creature looked quietly at each other, and then the seal rolled

over, with a snuffling, self-satisfied air, winking its soft eyes with immense complacency.

Helen, in her alarm, could not resist a smile at this conclusion of so terrible a demonstration; for, with all their gentle expression, the tusks of the brute looked formidable. But, when she saw Hazel pushing them aside, and patting a cub on the back, she recovered her courage completely.

Then he took to his oars again; and, aided by the tide, which was now on the ebb, he rowed round the south-western extremity of the island. He found the water here, as he anticipated, very shallow.

It was midday when they were fairly on the southern coast; and, now sailing with the wind aft, the cutter ran through the water at racing speed. Fearing that some reefs or rocky formations might exist in their course, he reduced sail, and kept away from the shore — about a mile. At this distance he was better able to see inland, and mark down the accidence of its formation.

The southern coast was uniform, and Helen said it resembled the cliffs of the Kentish or Sussex coast of England, only the English white was here replaced by the pale volcanic gray. It was plain that the water-shed of the island was all northward. After some miles of this they approached the eastern end, where rose the circular mountain of which mention has been already made. This eminence had evidently at one time been detached from the rest of the land to which it was now joined by a neck of swamp about a mile and a half in breadth, and two miles in length.

Hazel proposed to reconnoitre this part of the shore nearly, and ran the boat close in to land. The reeds or canes with which this bog was densely clothed grew in a dark spongy soil. Here and there this waste was dotted with ragged trees which he recognized as the cypress:

from their gaunt branches hung a black, funereal kind of weeper, a kind of moss, resembling iron-gray horsehair both in texture and uses, though not so long in the staple.

This parasite, Hazel explained to Helen, was very common in such marshy ground, and was the death flag hung out by Nature to warn man that malaria and fever were the invisible and inalienable inhabitants of that fatal neighborhood.

Looking narrowly along the low shore for some good landing, where under shelter of a tree they might repose for an hour, and spread their midday repast, they discovered an opening in the reeds, a kind of lagoon or bayou, extending into the morass between the high lands of the island and the circular mountain, but close under the base of the latter. This inlet he proposed to explore, and accordingly the sail was taken down and the cutter was poled into the narrow creek. The water here was so shallow that the keel slid over the quicksand into which the oar sank freely. The creek soon became narrow, the water deeper, and of a blacker color, and the banks more densely covered with canes. These grew to the height of ten and twelve feet, and as close as wheat in a thick crop. The air felt dank and heavy, and hummed with myriads of insects. The black water became so deep and the bottom so sticky that Hazel took to the oars again. The creek narrowed as they proceeded, until it proved scarcely wide enough to admit of his working the boat. The height of the reeds hindered the view on either side. Suddenly, however, and after proceeding very slowly through the bends of the canal, these decreased in height and density, and the voyagers emerged into an open space of about five acres in extent, a kind of oasis in this reedy desert, created by a mossy mound which arose amidst the morass, and afforded firm footing, of which a grove of trees and innu-

merable shrubs availed themselves. Helen uttered an exclamation of delight as this island of foliage in a sea of reeds met her eyes, that had been famished with the arid monotony of the brake.

They soon landed.

Helen insisted on the preparations for their meal being left to her, and having selected a sheltered spot, she was soon busy with their frugal food. Hazel surveyed the spot, and selecting a red cedar, was soon seated forty feet above her head; making a topographical survey of the neighborhood. He found that the bayou by which they had entered continued its course to the northern shore, thus cutting off the mountain or easterly end, and forming of it a separate island. A quarter of a mile farther on the bayou or canal parted, forming two streams, of which that to the left seemed the main channel. This he determined to follow. Turning to the west, that is, towards their home, he saw at a distance of two miles a crest of hills broken into cliffs, which defined the limit of the main land. The sea had at one time occupied the site where the morass now stood. These cliffs formed a range, extending from north to south; their precipitous sides clothed here and there with trees, marked where the descent was broken by platforms. Between him and this range the morass extended. Hazel took note of three places where the descent from these hills into the marsh could, he believed, most readily be made.

On the eastern side, and close above him, arose the peculiar mountain. Its form was that of a truncated cone, and its sides densely covered with trees of some size.

The voice of Helen called him from his perch, and he descended quickly, leaping into a mass of brushwood growing at the foot of his tree. Helen stood a few yards from him, in admiration, before a large shrub.

"Look, Mr. Hazel, what a singular production," said the girl, as she stooped to examine the plant. It bore a number of red flowers, each growing out of a fruit like a prickly pear. These flowers were in various stages: some were just opening like tulips; others, more advanced, had expanded like umbrellas, and quite overlapped the fruit, keeping it from sun and dew; others had served their turn in that way, and been withered by the sun's rays. But, wherever this was the case, the fruit had also burst open and displayed or discharged its contents, and those contents looked like seeds; but on narrower inspection proved to be little insects with pink transparent wings, and bodies of incredibly vivid crimson.

Hazel examined the fruit and flowers very carefully, and stood rapt, transfixed.

"It must be!—and it is!" said he, at last. "Well, I'm glad I've not died without seeing it."

"What is it?" said she.

"One of the most valuable productions of the earth. It is cochineal. This is the Tunal tree."

"Oh, indeed!" said Helen, indifferently; "cochineal is used for a dye; but as it is not probable we shall require to dye anything, the discovery seems to me more curious than useful."

"You wanted some ink. This pigment, mixed with lime-juice, will form a beautiful red ink."

He asked her to hold her handkerchief under a bough of the Tunal tree, where the fruit was ripe. He then shook the bough. Some insects fell at once into the cloth. A great number rose and buzzed a little in the sun not a yard from where they were born; but the sun dried their blood so promptly that they soon fell dead in the handkerchief. Those that the sun so killed went through three phases of color before their eyes. They

fell down black or nearly. They whitened on the cloth: and after that came gradually to their final color, a flaming crimson. The insects thus treated, appeared the most vivid of all.

They soon secured about half a teacup full; rolled them up, and put them away: then they sat down and made a very hearty meal, for it was now past two o'clock. They re-entered the boat, and passing once more into the morass they found the channel of the bayou as it approached the northern shore less difficult of navigation. The bottom became sandy and hard, and the presence of trees in the swamp proved that spots of *terra firma* were more frequent. But the water shallowed, and, as they opened the shore, he saw with great vexation that the tide in receding had left the bar at the mouth of the canal visible in some parts. He pushed on, however, until the boat grounded. This was a sad affair. There lay the sea not fifty yards ahead. Hazel leaped out, and examined and forded the channel, which at this place was about two hundred feet wide. He found a narrow passage near the eastern side, and to this he towed the boat. Then he begged Miss Rolleston to land, and relieved the boat of the mast, sail, and oars. Thus lightened, he dragged her into the passage; but the time occupied in these preparations had been also occupied by Nature — the tide had receded, and the cutter stuck immovably in the water-way, about six fathoms short of deeper water.

"What is to be done now?" inquired Helen, when Hazel returned to her side, panting, but cheerful.

"We must await the rising of the tide. I fear we are imprisoned here for three hours at least."

There was no help for it. Helen made light of the misfortune. The spot where they had landed was enclosed between the two issues of the lagoon. They

walked along the shore to the more easterly and the narrower canal, and on arriving, Hazel found to his great annoyance that there was ample water to have floated the cutter had he selected that, the least promising road. He suggested a return by the road they came, and, passing into the other canal, by that to reach the sea. They hurried back, but found by this time the tide had left the cutter high and dry on the sand. So they had no choice but to wait.

Having three hours to spare, Hazel asked Miss Rolleston's permission to ascend the mountain. The ascent was too rugged and steep for her powers, and the seashore and adjacent groves would find her ample amusement during his absence. She accompanied him to the bank of the smaller lagoon, which he forded, and waving an adieu to her, he plunged into the dense wood with which the sides of the mountain were clothed.

She waited some time, and then she heard his voice shouting to her from the heights above. The mountain-top was about three-quarters of a mile from where she stood, but seemed much nearer. She turned back towards the boat, walking slowly, but paused as a faint and distant cry again reached her ear. It was not repeated, and then she entered the grove.

The ground beneath her feet was soft with velvety moss, and the dark foliage of the trees rendered the air cool and deliciously fragrant. After wandering for some time, she regained the edge of the grove near the boat, and selecting a spot at the foot of an aged cypress, she sat down with her back against its trunk. Then she took out Arthur's letter, and began to read those impassioned sentences: as she read she sighed deeply. But she detected herself pitying Arthur's condition more than she regretted her own. She fell into reverie, and from reverie into drowsy languor. How long she

remained in this state she could not remember, but a slight rustle overhead recalled her senses. Believing it to be a bird moving in the branches, she was resigning herself again to rest when she became sensible of a strange emotion, a conviction that something was watching her with a fixed gaze. She cast her eyes around, but saw nothing. She looked upwards. From the tree immediately above her lap depended a snake, its tail coiled around a dead branch. The reptile hung straight, its eyes fixed like two rubies upon Helen's, as very slowly it let itself down by its uncoiling tail. Now its head was on a level with hers; in another moment it must drop into her lap.

She was paralyzed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

After toiling up a rugged and steep ascent, encumbered with blocks of gray stone, of which the island seemed to be formed, forcing his way over fallen trees and through the tangled undergrowth of a species of wild vine, which abounded on the mountain-side, Hazel stopped to breathe and peer around, as well as the dense foliage permitted. He was up to his waist in scrub, and the stiff leaves of the bayonet plant rendered caution necessary in walking. At moments, through the dense foliage, he caught a glisten of the sea. The sun was in the north behind him, and by this alone he guided his road due southerly and upward. Once only he found a small cleared space about an acre in extent, and here it was he uttered the cry Helen heard. He waited a few moments in the hope to hear her voice in reply, but it did not reach him. Again he mounted upward, and now the ascent became at times so arduous that more than once he almost resolved to relinquish, or at least to defer, his task; but a moment's rest recalled him to himself, and he was one not easily baffled by difficulty or labor, so he toiled on until he judged the summit ought to have been reached. After pausing to take breath and counsel, he fancied that he had borne too much to the left, the ground to his right appeared to rise more than the path that he was pursuing, which had become level, and he concluded, that, instead of ascending, he was circling the mountain-top. He turned aside, therefore, and after ten minutes' hard climbing he was pushing through a thick and high scrub, when the earth

seemed to give way beneath him, and he fell — into an abyss.

He was ingulfed. He fell from bush to bush — down, down — scratch — rip — plump! until he lodged in a prickly bush, more winded than hurt. Out of this he crawled, only to discover himself thus landed in a great and perfectly circular plain of about thirty acres in extent, or about three hundred and fifty yards in diameter. In the centre was a lake, also circular: the broad belt of shore around this lake was covered with rich grass, level as a bowling-green, and all this again was surrounded by a nearly perpendicular cliff, down which indeed he had fallen: this cliff was thickly clothed with shrubs and trees.

Hazel recognized the crater of an extinct volcano.

On examining the lake, he found the waters impregnated with volcanic products. Its bottom was formed of asphaltum. Having made a circuit of the shores, he perceived on the westerly side — that next the island — a break in the cliff; and on a narrow examination he discovered an outlet. It appeared to him that the lake at one time had emptied its waters through this ancient watercourse. The descent here was not only gradual, but the old river-bed was tolerably free from obstructions, especially of the vegetable kind.

He made his way rapidly downwards, and in half an hour reached marshy ground. The cane-brake now lay before him. On his left he saw the sea on the south, about a third of a mile. He knew that to the right must be the sea on the north, about half a mile or so. He bent his way thither. The edge of the swamp was very clear, and, though somewhat spongy, afforded good walking unimpeded. As he approached the spot where he judged the boat to be, the underwood thickened, the trees again interlaced their arms, and he had to struggle

through the foliage. At length he struck the smaller lagoon, and followed its course to the shore, where he had previously crossed. In a few moments he reached the boat, and was pleased to find her afloat. The rising tide had even moved her a few feet back into the canal.

Hazel shouted to apprise Miss Rolleston of his return, and then proceeded to restore the mast to its place, and replace the rigging and the oars. This occupied some little time. He felt surprised that she had not appeared. He shouted again. No reply.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Hazel advanced hurriedly into the grove, which he hunted thoroughly, but without effect. He satisfied himself that she could not have quitted the spot, since the marsh enclosed it on one side, the canals on the second and third, the sea on the fourth. He returned to the boat more surprised than anxious. He waited awhile, and again shouted her name — stopped — listened — no answer.

Yet surely Helen could not have been more than a hundred yards from where he stood. His heart beat with a strange sense of apprehension. He heard nothing but the rustling of the foliage and the sop of the waves on the shore, as the tide crept up the shingle. As his eyes roved in every direction, he caught sight of something white near the foot of a withered cypress tree, not fifty yards from where he stood. He approached the bushes in which the tree was partially concealed on that side, and quickly recognized a portion of Helen's dress. He ran towards her — burst through the underwood, and gained the enclosure. She was sitting there, asleep, as he conjectured, her back leaning against the trunk. He contemplated her thus for one moment, and then he advanced, about to awaken her; but was struck speechless. Her face was ashy pale, her eyes open and widely distended; her bosom heaved slowly. Hazel approached rapidly, and called to her.

Her eyes never moved, not a limb stirred. She sat glaring forward. On her lap was coiled a snake — gray — mottled with muddy green.

Hazel looked round and selected a branch of the dead tree, about three feet in length. Armed with this, he advanced slowly to the reptile. It was very quiet, thanks to the warmth of her lap. He pointed the stick at it; the vermin lifted its head, and its tail began to quiver; then it darted at the stick, throwing itself its entire length. Hazel retreated, the snake coiled again, and again darted. By repeating this process four or five times, he enticed the creature away; and then availing himself of a moment before it could recoil, he struck it a smart blow on the neck.

When Hazel turned to Miss Rolleston, he found her still fixed in the attitude into which terror had transfixed her. The poor girl had remained motionless for an hour, under the terrible fascination of the reptile, comatized. He spoke to her, but a quick spasmodic action of her throat, and a quivering of her hands, alone responded. The sight of her suffering agonized him beyond expression, but he took her hands, — he pressed them, for they were icy cold, — he called piteously on her name. But she seemed incapable of effort. Then, stooping, he raised her tenderly in his arms, and carried her to the boat, where he laid her, still unresisting and incapable.

With trembling limbs and weak hands he launched the cutter, and they were once more afloat and bound homeward.

He dipped the baler into the fresh water he had brought with him for their daily supply, and dashed it on her forehead. This he repeated, until he perceived that her breathing became less painful and more rapid. Then he raised her a little, and her head rested upon his arm. When they reached the entrance of the bay he was obliged to pass it, for the wind being still southerly, he could not enter by the north gate, but came round

and ran in by the western passage, the same by which they had left the same morning.

Hazel bent over Helen, and whispered tenderly that they were at home. She answered by a sob. In half an hour the keel grated on the sand, near the boat-house. Then he asked her if she were strong enough to reach her hut. She raised her head, but she felt dizzy; he helped her to land; all power had forsaken her limbs; her head sank on his shoulder, and his arm, wound round her lithe figure, alone prevented her falling helplessly at his feet; again he raised her in his arms, and bore her to the hut. Here he laid her down on her bed, and stood for a moment beside her, unable to restrain his tears.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was a wretched and anxious night for Hazel. He watched the hut, without the courage to approach it. That one moment of weakness which occurred to him on board the Proserpine, when he had allowed Helen to perceive the nature of his feelings towards her, had rendered all his actions open to suspicion. He dared not exhibit towards her any sympathy — he might not extend to her the most ordinary civility. If she fell ill, if fever supervened! how could he nurse her, attend upon her? His touch must have a significance, he knew that; for, as he bore her insensible form, he embraced rather than carried the precious burthen. Could he look upon her in her suffering without betraying his forbidden love? And then would not his attentions afflict more than console?

Chewing the cud of such bitter thoughts, he passed the night, without noticing the change which was taking place over the island. The sun rose; and this awakened him from his reverie, which had replaced sleep; he looked around, and then became sensible of the warnings in the air.

The sea-birds flew about vaguely and absurdly, and seemed sporting in currents of wind; yet there was but little wind down below. Presently, clouds came flying over the sky, and blacker masses gathered on the horizon. The sea changed color.

Hazel knew the weather was breaking. The wet season was at hand — the moment when fever, if such an invisible inhabitant there was on that island, would

visit them. In a few hours the rain would be upon them, and he reproached himself with want of care in the construction of the hut. For some hours he hovered around it, before he ventured to approach the door, and call to Helen. He thought he heard her voice faintly, and he entered. She lay there as he had placed her.

Hazel took her unresisting hand, which he would have given a world to press. He felt her pulse; it was weak, but slow. Her hand dropped helplessly when he released it.

Leaving the hut quietly, but hastily, he descended the hill to the rivulet, which he crossed. About half a mile above the boat-house the stream forked, one of its branches coming from the west, the other from the east. Between this latter branch and Terrapin Wood was a stony hill; to this spot Hazel went, and fell to gathering a handful of poppies. When he had obtained a sufficient quantity he returned to the boat-house, made a small fire of chips, and filling his tin baler with water, he set down the poppies to boil. When the liquor was cool, he measured out a portion and drank it. In about twenty minutes his temples began to throb, a sensation which was rapidly followed by nausea.

It was midday before he recovered from the effects of his experiment sufficiently to take food. Then he waited for two hours, and felt much restored. He stole to the hut and looked in. Helen lay there as he had left her. He stooped over her: her eyes were half-closed, and she turned them slowly upon him; her lips moved a little — that was all. He felt her pulse again; it was still weaker, and slower. He rose and went away, and regaining the boat-house, he measured out a portion of the poppy liquor, one-third of the dose he had previously taken, and drank it. No headache or nausea succeeded: he felt his pulse; it became quick and violent, while a

sense of numbness overcame him, and he slept. It was but for a few minutes. He awoke with throbbing brow, and some sickness; but with a sense of delight at the heart, for he had found an opiate, and prescribed its quantity.

He drained the liquor away from the poppy leaves, and carried it to the hut. Measuring with great care a small quantity, he lifted the girl's head and placed it to her lips. She drank it mechanically. Then he watched beside her, until her breathing and her pulse changed in character. She slept. He turned aside then, and buried his face in his hands and prayed fervently for her life — prayed as we pray for the daily bread of the heart. He prayed and waited.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The next morning, when Helen awoke, she was still weak; her head ached, but she was herself. Hazel had made a broth for her from the fleshy part of a turtle; this greatly revived her, and, by midday, she was able to sit up. Having seen that her wants were within her reach, he left her; but she heard him busily engaged on the roof of her hut.

On his return, he explained to her his fears that the structure was scarcely as weather-proof as he desired; and he anticipated hourly the commencement of the rainy season. Helen smiled and pointed to the sky, which here was clear and bright. But Hazel shook his head doubtingly. The wet season would commence probably with an atmospheric convulsion, and then settle down to uninterrupted rain. Helen refused obstinately to believe in more rain than they had experienced on board the boat — a genial shower.

"You will see," replied Hazel. "If you do not change your views within the next three days, then call me a false prophet."

The following day passed, and Helen recovered more strength, but still was too weak to walk; but she employed herself, at Hazel's request, in making a rope of cocoanut fibre, some forty yards long. This he required to fish up the spar to a sufficient height on the great palm-tree, and bind it firmly in its place. While she worked nimbly, he employed himself in gathering a store of such things as they would require during the coming wintry season. She watched him with a smile,

but he persevered. So that day passed. The next morning the rope was finished. Helen was not so well, and was about to help herself to the poppy liquor, when Hazel happily stopped her hand in time; he showed her the exact dose necessary, and explained minutely the effects of a larger draught. Then he shouldered the rope, and set out for Palm-tree Point.

He was absent about six hours, of which Helen slept four. And for two, which seemed very long, she ruminated. What was she thinking of that made her smile and weep at the same moment? and she looked so impatiently towards the door.

He entered at last very fatigued. It was eleven miles to the Point and back. While eating his frugal supper, he gave her a detail of his day's adventures. Strange to say, he had not seen a single seal on the sands. He described how he had tied one end of her rope to the middle of the spar, and with the other between his teeth, he climbed the great palm. For more than an hour he toiled; he gained its top, passed the rope over one of its branches, and hauled up the spar to about eighty feet above the ground; then descending with the other end, he wound the rope spirally round and round the tree, thus binding to its trunk the first twenty feet by which the spar hung from the branch.

She listened very carelessly, he thought, and betrayed little interest in this enterprise which had cost him so much labor and fatigue.

When he had concluded, she was silent awhile, and then, looking up quickly, said, to his great surprise,—

"I think I may increase the dose of your medicine there. You are mistaken in its power. I am sure I can take four times what you gave me."

"Indeed you are mistaken," he answered, quickly. "I gave you the extreme measure you can take with safety."

"How do you know that? you can only guess at its effects. At any rate, I shall try it."

Hazel hesitated, and then confessed that he had made a little experiment on himself before risking its effects upon her.

Helen looked up at him as he said this so simply and quietly. Her great eyes filled with an angelic light. Was it admiration? Was it thankfulness? Her bosom heaved, and her lips quivered. It was but a moment, and she felt glad that Hazel had turned away from her and saw nothing.

A long silence followed this little episode, when she was aroused from her reverie.

Patter — pat — pat — patter.

She looked up.

Pat — patter — patter.

Their eyes met. It was the rain. Hazel only smiled a little, and ran down to his boat-house, to see that all was right there, and then returned with a large bundle of chips, with which he made a fire, for the sky had darkened overhead. Gusts of wind ran along the water; it had become suddenly chilly. They had almost forgotten the feel of wet weather.

Ere the fire had kindled, the rain came down in torrents, and the matted roof being resonant, they heard it strike here and there above their heads.

Helen sat down on her little stool and reflected.

In that hut were two persons. One had foretold this, and feared it, and provided against it. The other had said petulantly it was a bugbear.

And now the rain was pattering, and the Prophet was on his knees making her as comfortable as he could in spite of all, and was not the man to remind her he had foretold it.

She pondered his character while she watched his

movements. He put down his embers, then he took a cocoa-pod out from the wall, cut it in slices with his knife, and made a fine clear fire; then he ran out again, in spite of Helen's remonstrance, and brought a dozen large scales of the palm-tree. It was all the more cheering for the dismal scene without and the pattering of the rain on the resounding roof.

But, thanks to Hazel's precaution, the hut proved weather tight; of which fact having satisfied himself, he bade her good-night. He was at the door when her voice recalled him.

"Mr. Hazel, I cannot rest this night without asking your pardon for all the unkind things I may have done and said; without thanking you humbly for your great forbearance and your — respect for the unhap— I mean the unfortunate girl thus cast upon your mercy."

She held out her hand; he took it between his own, and faintly expressed his gratitude for her kindness; and so she sent him away brimful of happiness.

The rain was descending in torrents. She heard it, but he did not feel it; for she had spread her angel's wings over his existence, and he regained his sheltered boat-house he knew not how.

CHAPTER XXX.

The next day was Sunday. Hazel had kept a calendar of the week, and every seventh day was laid aside with jealousy, to be devoted to such simple religious exercises as he could invent. The rain still continued, with less violence indeed, but without an hour's intermission. After breakfast he read to her the exodus of the Israelites, and their sufferings during that desert life. He compared those hardships with their own troubles, and pointed out to her how their condition presented many things to be thankful for. The island was fruitful, the climate healthy. They might have been cast away on a sandy key or reef, where they would have perished slowly and miserably of hunger and exposure. Then they were spared to each other. Had she been alone there, she could not have provided for herself; had he been cast away a solitary man, the island would have been to him an intolerable prison.

In all these reflections Hazel was very guarded that no expression should escape him to arouse her apprehension. He was so careful of this, that she observed his caution, and watched his restraint. And Helen was thinking more of this than of the holy subject on which he was discoursing. The disguise he threw over his heart was penetrable to the girl's eye. She saw his love in every careful word, and employed herself in detecting it under his rigid manner. Secure in her own position, she could examine him from the loopholes of her soul, and take a pleasure in witnessing the suppressed happiness she could bestow with a word. She did not wonder at

her power. The best of women have the natural vanity to take for granted the sway they assume over the existence which submits to them.

A week passed thus, and Hazel blessed the rain that drove them to this sociability. He had prepared the bladder of a young seal which had drifted ashore dead. This membrane dried in the sun formed a piece of excellent parchment, and he desired to draw upon it a map of the island. To accomplish this, the first thing was to obtain a good red ink from the cochineal, which is crimson. He did according to his means. He got one of the tin vessels, and filed it till he had obtained a considerable quantity of the metal. This he subjected for forty hours to the action of lime-juice. He then added the cochineal, and mixed till he obtained a fine scarlet. In using it he added a small quantity of a hard and pure gum, — he had found gum abounded in the island. His pen was made from an osprey's feather, hundreds of which were strewn about the cliffs, and some of these he had already secured and dried.

Placing his tin baler before him, on which he had scratched his notes, he drew a map of the island.

"What shall we call it?" said he.

Helen paused, and then replied, "Call it 'GODSEND' Island."

"So I will," he said, and wrote it down.

Then they named the places they had seen. The reef Helen had discovered off the north-west coast they called "White Water Island," because of the breakers. Then came "Seal Bay," "Palm-tree Point," "Mount Lookout" (this was the hill due south of where they lived). They called the cane brake "Wild Duck Swamp," and the spot where they lunched "Cochineal Clearing." The mountain was named "Mount Cavity."

"But what shall we call the capital of the kingdom,

this hut?" said Miss Rolleston, as she leaned over him and pointed to the spot.

"St. Helen's," said Hazel, looking up; and he wrote it down ere she could object.

Then there was a little awkward pause, while he was busily occupied in filling up some topographical details. She turned it off gayly.

"What are those caterpillars, that you have drawn there, sprawling over my kingdom?" she asked.

"Caterpillars! you are complimentary, Miss Rolleston. Those are mountains."

"Oh, indeed; and those lines you are now drawing are rivers, I presume."

"Yes; let us call this branch of our solitary estuary, which runs westward, the River Lea, and this, to the east, the River Medway. Is such your majesty's pleasure?"

CHAPTER XXXI.

Helen's strength was coming back to her but slowly; she complained of great lassitude and want of appetite. But the following day having cleared up, the sun shone out with great power and brilliancy. She gladly welcomed the return of the fine weather, but Hazel shook his head; ten days' rain was not their portion, the bad weather would return, and complete the month or six weeks' winter to which nature was entitled. The next evening the appearance of the sky confirmed his opinion. The sun set like a crimson shield; gory, and double its usual size. It entered into a thick bank of dark violet cloud that lay on the horizon, and seemed to split the vapor into rays, but of a dusky kind; immediately above this crimson, the clouds were of a brilliant gold, but higher they were the color of rubies, and went gradually off to gray.

But, as the orb dipped to the horizon, a solid pile of unearthly clouds came up from the south-east; their bodies were singularly and unnaturally black, and mottled with copper color, and hemmed with a fiery yellow; and these infernal clouds towered up their heads, pressing forward as if they all strove for precedency; it was like Milton's fiends attacking the sky. The rate at which they climbed was wonderful. The sun set and the moon rose full, and showed those angry masses surging upwards and jostling each other as they flew.

Yet below it was dead calm.

Having admired the sublimity of the scene, and seen the full moon rise, but speedily lose her light in a brassy

halo, they entered the hut, which was now the head-quarters, and they supped together there.

While they were eating their little meal, the tops of the trees were heard to sigh, so still was everything else. None the less did those strange clouds fly northward, eighty miles an hour. After supper Helen sat busy over the fire, where some gum, collected by Hazel, resembling India rubber, was boiling; she was preparing to cover a pair of poor Welch's shoes, inside and out, with a coat of this material, which Hazel believed to be water-proof. She sat in such a position that he could watch her. It was a happy evening. She seemed content. She had got over her fear of him; they were good comrades if they were nothing more. It was happiness to him to be by her side even on those terms. He thought of it all as he looked at her. How distant she had seemed once to him, what an unapproachable goddess! Yet there she was by his side, in a hut he had made for her.

He could not help sipping the soft intoxicating draught her mere presence offered him. But by and by he felt his heart was dissolving within him, and he was trifling with danger. He must not look on her too long, seated by the fire like a wife. The much-enduring man rose, and turned his back upon the sight he loved so dearly: he went out at the open door intending to close it, and bid her good-night. But he did not do so, just then; for his attention as an observer of nature was arrested by the unusual conduct of certain animals. Gannets and other sea-birds were running about the opposite wood and craning their necks in a strange way. He had never seen one enter that wood before.

Seals and sea-lions were surrounding the slope, and crawling about, and now and then plunging into the river, which they crossed with infinite difficulty, for it was running very high and strong. The trees also

sighed louder than ever. Hazel turned back to tell Miss Rolleston something extraordinary was going on. She sat in sight from the river, and, as he came towards the hut, he saw her sitting by the fire reading.

He stopped short. Her work lay at her feet. She had taken out a letter, and she was reading it by the fire.

As she read it her face was a puzzle. But Hazel saw the act alone, and a dart of ice seemed to go through and through him.

This, then, was her true source of consolation. He thought it was so before. He had even reason to think so. But, never seeing any palpable proofs, he had almost been happy. He turned sick with jealous misery, and stood there rooted and frozen.

Then came a fierce impulse to shut the sight out that caused this pain.

He almost flung her portcullis to, and made his hands bleed. But a bleeding heart does not feel scratches.

"Good-night," said he hoarsely.

"Good-night," said she kindly.

And why should she not read his letter? She was his affianced bride, bound to him by honor as well as inclination. This was the reflection to which, after a sore battle with his loving heart, the much-enduring man had to come at last; and he had come to it, and was getting back his peace of mind, though not his late complacency, and about to seek repose in sleep, when suddenly a clap of wind came down like thunder, and thrashed the island and everything in it.

All things animate and inanimate seemed to cry out as the blow passed.

Another soon followed, and another, — intermittent gusts at present, but of such severity that not one came without making its mark.

Birds were driven away like paper; the sea-lions

whimpered, and crouched into corners, and huddled together, and held each other, whining.

Hazel saw but one thing; the frail edifice he had built for the creature he adored. He looked out of his boat, and fixed his horror-stricken eyes on it: he saw it waving to and fro, yet still firm. But he could not stay there. If not in danger she must be terrified. He must go and support her. He left his shelter, and ran towards her hut. With a whoop and a scream another blast tore through the wood, and caught him. He fell, dug his hands into the soil, and clutched the earth. While he was in that position, he heard a sharp crack; he looked up in dismay, and saw that one of Helen's trees had broken like a carrot, and the head was on the ground leaping about; while a succession of horrible sounds of crashing, and rending, and tearing, showed the frail hut was giving way on every side; racked and riven, and torn to pieces. Hazel, though a stout man, uttered cries of terror death would never have drawn from him; and, with a desperate, headlong rush, he got to the place where the bower had been; but now it was a prostrate skeleton, with the mat roof flapping like a loose sail above it, and Helen below.

As he reached the hut, the wind got hold of the last of the four shrubs, that did duty for a door, and tore it from the cord that held it, and whirled it into the air; it went past Hazel's face like a bird flying.

Though staggered himself by the same blow of wind, he clutched the tree and got into the hut.

He found her directly. She was kneeling beneath the mat that a few minutes ago had been her roof. He extricated her in a moment, uttering inarticulate cries of pity and fear.

"Don't be frightened," said she. "I am not hurt."

But he felt her quiver from head to foot. He wrapped

her in all her rugs, and, thinking of nothing but her safety, lifted her in his strong arms to take her to his own place, which was safe from wind at least.

But this was no light work. To go there erect was impossible.

Holding tight by the tree, he got her to the lee of the tent, and waited for a lull. He went rapidly down the hill, but ere he reached the river, a gust came careering furiously. A sturdy young tree was near him. He placed her against it, and wound his arms round her and its trunk. The blast came: the tree bent down almost to the ground, then whirled round, recovered, shivered; but he held firmly. It passed. Again he lifted her, and bore her to the boat-house. When he turned a moment to enter it, the wind almost choked her, and her long hair lashed his face like a whip. But he got her in, and they sat panting and crouching, but safe. They were none too soon; the tempest increased in violence, and became more continuous.

No clouds, but a ghastly glare all over the sky. No rebellious waves, but a sea hissing and foaming under its master's lash. The river ran roaring and foaming by, and made the boat heave even in its little creek. The wind, though it could no longer shake them, went screaming terribly close over their heads, — no longer like air in motion, but, solid and keen, it seemed the Almighty's scythe mowing down Nature: and soon it became, like turbid water, blackened with the leaves, branches, and fragments of all kinds it whirled along with it. Trees fell crashing on all sides, and the remains of the hut passed over their heads into the sea.

Helen behaved admirably. Speech was impossible, but she thanked him without it — eloquently; she nestled her little hand into Hazel's, and, to Hazel, that night, with all its awful sights and sounds, was a blissful

one. She had been in danger, but now was safe by his side. She had pressed his hand to thank him, and now she was cowering a little towards him in a way that claimed him as her protector. Her glorious hair blew over him and seemed to net him: and now and then, as they heard some crash nearer and more awful than another, she clutched him quickly though lightly; for, in danger, her sex love to feel a friend; it is not enough to see him near: and once, when a great dusky form of a sea-lion came crawling over the mound, and, whimpering, peeped into the boat-house, she even fled to his shoulder with both hands for a moment, and was there, light as a feather, till the creature had passed on. And his soul was full of peace, and a great tranquillity overcame him. He heard nothing of the wrack, knew nothing of the danger.

Oh, mighty Love! The tempest might blow, and fill air and earth with ruin, so that it spared her. The wind was kind, and gentle the night, which brought that hair round his face, and that head so near his shoulder, and gave him the holy joy of protecting under his wing the soft creature he adored.

CHAPTER XXXII.

On the morning that followed this memorable night, our personages seemed to change characters. Hazel sat down before the relics of the hut — three or four strings dangling, and a piece of net-work waving — and eyed them with shame, regret, and humiliation. He was so absorbed in his self-reproaches that he did not hear a light footstep, and Helen Rolleston stood near him a moment or two, and watched the play of his countenance with a very inquisitive and kindly light in her own eyes.

"Never mind," said she, soothingly.

Hazel started at the music.

"Never mind your house being blown to atoms, and mine has stood?" said he, half reproachfully.

"You took too much pains with mine. And now I want you to come and look at the havoc. It is terrible; and yet so grand." And thus she drew him away from the sight that caused his pain.

They entered the wood, and viewed the devastation. Prostrate trees lay across one another in astonishing numbers, and in the strangest positions: and their glorious plumes swept the earth. "Come," said he, "it is a bad thing for the poor trees, but not for us. See, the place is strewed with treasures. Here is a tree full of fans all ready made. And what is that? A horse's tail growing on a cocoa tree! and a long one too! that will make ropes for you, and thread for me. Ah, and here is a cabbage. Poor Mr. Welch! Well, for one thing, you need never saw nor climb any more. See the advantages of a hurricane."

From the wood she took him to the shore, and there they found many birds lying dead; and Hazel picked up several that he had read of as good to eat. For certain signs had convinced him his fair and delicate companion was carnivora, and must be nourished accordingly. Seeing him so employed, she asked him archly whether he was beginning to see the comforts of a hurricane. "Not yet," said he; "the account is far from even."

"Then come to where the rock was blown down." She led the way gayly across the sands to a point where an over-hanging crag had fallen, with two trees, and a quantity of earth and plants that grew above it. But, when they got nearer, she became suddenly grave, and stood still. The mass had fallen upon a sheltered place, where seals were hiding from the wind, and had buried several; for two or three limbs were sticking out, of victims overwhelmed in the ruin; and a magnificent sea-lion lay clear of the smaller rubbish, but quite dead. The cause was not far to seek: a ton of hard rock had struck him, and then ploughed up the sand in a deep furrow, and now rested within a yard or two of the animal, whose back it had broken. Hazel went up to the creature and looked at it: then he came to Helen; she was standing aloof. "Poor bugbear," said he. "Come away: it is an ugly sight for you."

"Oh, yes," said Helen. Then, as they returned, "Does not that reconcile you to the loss of a hut? We are not blown away nor crushed."

"That is true," said Hazel; "but suppose your health should suffer from the exposure to such fearful weather. So unlucky! so cruel! just as you were beginning to get stronger."

"I am all the better for it. Shall I tell you? Excitement is a good thing; not too often, of course, but now

and then; and when we are in the humor for it, it is meat and drink and medicine to us."

"What! to a delicate young lady?"

"Ay, 'to a delicate young lady.' Last night has done me a world of good. It has shaken me out of myself. I am in better health and spirits. Of course I am very sorry the hut is blown down — because you took so much trouble to build it; but, on my own account, I really don't care a straw. Find me some corner to nestle in at night, and all day I mean to be about, and busy as a bee, helping you, and — Breakfast! breakfast! Oh, how hungry I am." And this spirited girl led the way to the boat with a briskness and a vigor that charmed and astonished him.

"Souvent femme varie."

This gracious behavior did not blind Hazel to the serious character of the situation, and all breakfast-time he was thinking and thinking, and often kept a morsel in his mouth, and forgot to eat it for several seconds, he was so anxious and puzzled. At last he said, "I know a large hollow tree with apertures. If I were to close them all but one, and keep that for the door? No: trees have betrayed me; I'll never trust another tree with you. Stay: I know — I know a cavern." He uttered the verb rather loudly, but the substantive with a sudden feebleness of intonation that was amusing. His timidity was superfluous; if he had said he knew "a bank whereon the wild thyme grows," the suggestion would have been well received that morning.

"A cavern!" cried Helen. "It has always been the dream of my life to live in a cavern."

Hazel brightened up. But the next moment he clouded again. "But I forgot. It will not do: there is a spring running right through it; it comes down nearly perpen-

dicular, through a channel it has bored, or enlarged; and splashes on the floor."

"How convenient!" said Helen; "then I shall have a bath in my room, instead of having to go miles for it. By the by, now you have invented the shower-bath, please discover soap. Not that one really wants any in this island; for there is no dust, and the very air seems purifying. But who can shake off the prejudices of early education?"

Hazel said, "Now I'll laugh as much as you like, when once this care is off my mind."

He ran off to the cavern, and found it spacious and safe; but the spring was falling in great force, and the roof of the cave glistening with moisture. It looked a hopeless case. But if Necessity is the mother of invention, surely Love is the father. He mounted to the rock above, and found the spot where the spring suddenly descended into the earth with the loudest gurgle he had ever heard; a gurgle of defiance. Nothing was to be done there. But he traced it upwards a little way, and found a place where it ran beside a deep decline. "Aha, my friend!" said he. He got his spade, and with some hours' hard work dug it a fresh channel, and carried it away entirely from its course. He returned to the cavern. Water was dripping very fast; but, on looking up, he could see the light of day twinkling at the top of the spiral watercourse he had robbed of its supply. Then he conceived a truly original idea: why not turn his empty watercourse into a chimney, and so give to one element what he had taken from another? He had no time to execute this just then, for the tide was coming in, and he could not afford to lose any one of those dead animals. So he left the funnel to drip, that being a process he had no means of expediting, and moored the sea-lion to the very rock that had killed him, and was

proceeding to dig out the seals, when a voice he never could hear without a thrill, summoned him to dinner.

It was a plentiful repast, and included roast pintado and cabbage-palm. Helen Rolleston informed him during dinner that he would no longer be allowed to monopolize the labor attendant upon their condition.

"No," said she, "you are always working for me, and I shall work for you. Cooking and washing are a woman's work, not a man's; and so are plaiting and netting."

This healthy resolution, once formed, was adhered to with a constancy that belonged to the girl's character. The roof of the ruined hut came ashore in the bay that evening, and was fastened over the boat. Hazel lighted a bonfire in the cavern, and had the satisfaction of seeing some of the smoke issue above. But he would not let Miss Rolleston occupy it yet. He shifted her things to the boat, and slept in the cave himself. However, he lost no time in laying down a great hearth, and built a fireplace and chimney in the cave. The chimney went up to the hole in the arch of the cave; then came the stone funnel, stolen from Nature; and above, on the upper surface of the cliff, came the chimney-pot. Thus the chimney acted like a German stove: it stood in the centre, and soon made the cavern very dry and warm, and a fine retreat during the rains. When it was ready for occupation, Helen said she would sail to it; she would not go by land; that was too tame for her. Hazel had only to comply with her humor, and at high water they got into the boat, and went down the river into the sea with a rush that made Helen wince. He soon rowed her across the bay to a point distant not more than fifty yards from the cavern, and installed her. But he never returned to the river; it was an inconvenient place to make excursions from; and, besides, all his work was

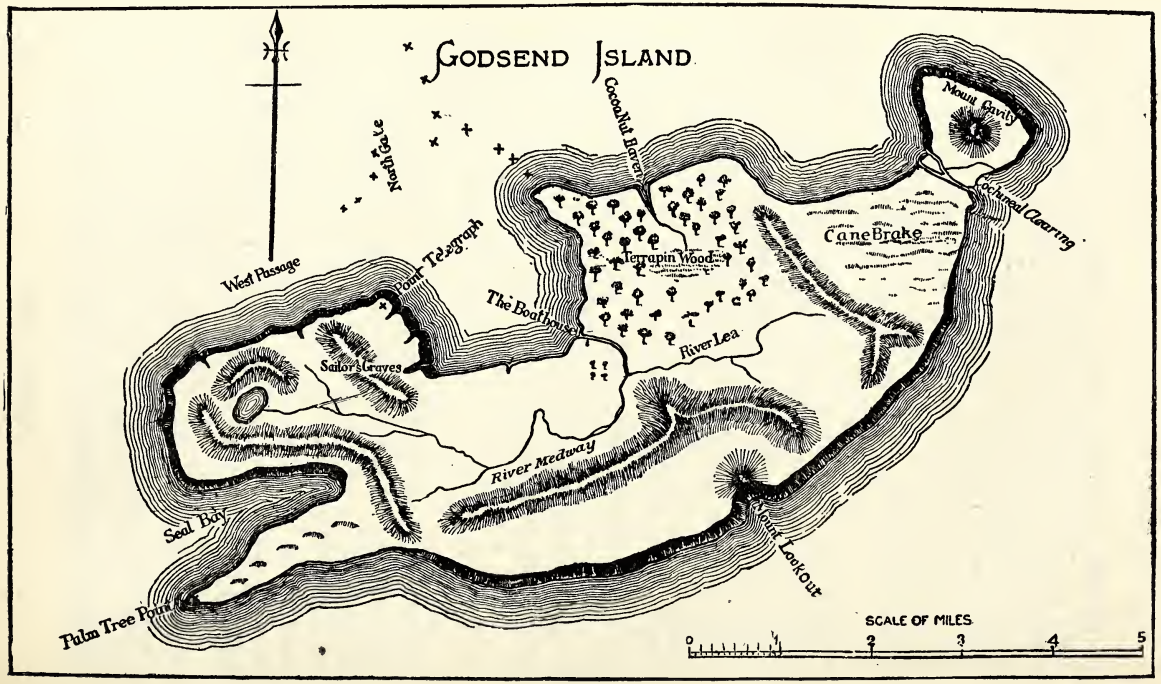
now either in or about the cavern; and that convenient hurricane, as Helen called it, not only made him a builder again; it also made him a currier, a soap-boiler, and a salter. So they drew the boat just above high-water mark in a sheltered nook, and he set up his arsenal ashore.

In this situation, day glided by after day, and week after week, in vigorous occupations, brightened by social intercourse, and in some degree by the beauty and the friendship of the animals. Of all this industry we can only afford a brief summary. Hazel fixed two uprights at each side of the cavern's mouth, and connected each pair by a beam; a netting laid on these, and covered with gigantic leaves from the prostrate palms, made a sufficient roof in this sheltered spot. On this terrace they could sit even in the rain, and view the sea. Helen cooked in the cave, but served dinner up on this beautiful terrace. So now she had a But and a Ben, as the Scotch say. He got a hogshead of oil from the sea-lion; and so the cave was always lighted now, and that was a great comfort, and gave them more hours of indoor employment and conversation. The poor bugbear really brightened their existence. Of the same oil, boiled down and mixed with wood ashes, he made soap, to Helen's great delight. The hide of this animal was so thick he could do nothing with it but cut off pieces to make the soles of shoes if required. But the seals were miscellaneous treasures; he contrived with guano and aromatics to curry their skins; of their bladders he made vile parchment, and of their entrails gut, catgut, and twine, beyond compare. He salted two cubs, and laid up the rest in store, by enclosing large pieces in clay. When these were to be used, the clay was just put into hot embers for some hours, then broken, and the meat eaten with all its juices preserved.

Helen cooked and washed, and manufactured salt; and collected quite a store of wild cotton, though it grew very sparingly, and it cost her hours to find a few pods. But in hunting for it she found other things, — health for one. After sunset she was generally employed a couple of hours on matters which occupy the fair in every situation of life. She made herself a sealskin jacket and pork-pie hat. She made Mr. Hazel a man's cap of sealskin with a point. But her great work was with the cotton, which she plaited, and then sewed the plaits together and made pieces, which, after long labor, were made into jacket and petticoat.

For two hours after sunset, no more (they rose at peep of day), her physician allowed her to sit and work, which she did, and often smiled, while he sat by and discoursed to her of all the things he had read, and surprised himself by the strength and activity of his memory. He attributed it partly to the air of the island. Nor were his fingers idle even at night. He had tools to sharpen for the morrow, glass to make and polish out of a laminated crystal he had found. And then the hurricane had blown away, amongst many other properties, his map; so he had to make another with similar materials. He completed the map in due course, and gave it to Helen. It was open to the same strictures she had passed on the other. Hazel was no cartographer. Yet this time she had nothing but praise for it. How was that?

To the reader it is now presented, not as a specimen of cartographic art, but as a little curiosity in its way, being a *fac-simile* of the map John Hazel drew for Helen Rolleston, with such out-of-the-way materials as that out-of-the-way island afforded. Above all, it will enable the reader to follow our personages in their little excursions past and future, and also to trace the course of a mysterious event we have to record.


GODSEND ISLAND
North Gate
Cocoa Nut Bower
Mount Cavity
Cocoanut Clearing
West Passage
Point Telegraph
Cane Brake
Terrapin Wood
The Boat House
River Lea
Sailor's Graves
River Medway
Seal Bay
Point Lookout
Palm Tree Point
SCALE OF MILES.
0
1
2
3
4
5

Relieved of other immediate cares, Hazel's mind had time to dwell upon the problem Helen had set him; and one fine day a conviction struck him that he had taken a narrow and puerile view of it, and that, after all, there must be in the nature of things some way to attract ships from a distance. Possessed with this thought, he went up to Telegraph Point, abstracted his mind from all external objects, and fixed it on this idea, — but came down as he went. He descended by some steps he had cut sigzag for Helen's use, and as he put his foot on the fifth step — whoo, whirr, whiz — came nine ducks, cooling his head, they whizzed so close, and made right for the lagoons.

"Hum!" thought Hazel, "I never see you ducks fly in any direction but that."

This speculation rankled in him all night, and he told Helen he should reconnoitre at daybreak, but should not take her, as there might be snakes. He made the boat ready at daybreak, and certain gannets, pintadoes, boobies, and noddies, and divers with eyes in their heads like fiery jewels — birds whose greedy maws he had often gratified — chose to fancy he must be going a-fishing, and were on the alert, and rather troublesome. However, he got adrift, and ran out through North Gate, with a light westerly breeze, followed by a whole fleet of birds. These were joined in due course by another of his satellites, a young seal he called Tommy, also fond of fishing.

The feathered convoy soon tailed off, but Tommy stuck to him for about eight miles. He ran that distance to have a nearer look at a small island which lay due north of Telegraph Point. He satisfied himself it was little more than a very long, large reef, the neighborhood of which ought to be avoided by ships of burden, and resolving to set some beacon or other on it ere long, he christened it White Water Island, on account of

the surf: he came about and headed for the East Bluff.

Then Tommy gave him up in disgust; perhaps thought his conduct vacillating. Animals all despise that.

He soon landed almost under the volcano, and moored his boat not far from a cliff that seemed peaked with snow; but the snow was the guano of a thousand years. Exercising due caution this time, he got up to the lagoons, and found a great many ducks swimming about. He approached little parties to examine their varieties. They all swam out of his way; some of them even flew a few yards, and then settled. Not one would let him come within forty yards. This convinced Hazel the ducks were not natives of the island, but strangers, who were not much afraid, because they had never been molested on this particular island; but still distrusted man.

While he pondered thus, there was a great noise of wings, and about a dozen ducks flew over his head on the rise, and passed eastward, still rising till they got into the high currents, and away upon the wings of the wind for distant lands.

The grand rush of their wings and the off-hand way in which they spurned, abandoned, and disappeared from, an island that held him tight, made Hazel feel very small. His thoughts took the form of satire. "Lords of the creation, are we? We sink in water; in air we tumble; on earth we slaughter."

These pleasing reflections did not prevent his taking their exact line of flight, and barking a tree to mark it. He was about to leave the place, when he heard a splashing not far from him, and there was a duck jumping about on the water in a strange way. Hazel thought a snake had got hold of her, and ran to her assistance. He took her out of the water and soon found what was the matter; her bill was open, and a fish's tail sticking out.

Hazel inserted his finger and dragged out a small fish which had erected the spines on its back so opportunely as nearly to kill its destroyer. The duck recovered enough to quack in a feeble and dubious manner. Hazel kept her for Helen, because she was a plain brown duck. With some little reluctance he slightly shortened one wing, and stowed away his captive in the hold of the boat.

He happened to have a great stock of pitch in the boat, so he employed a few hours in writing upon the guano rocks. On one he wrote in huge letters, —

AN ENGLISH LADY WRECKED HERE.
HASTE TO HER RESCUE.

On another he wrote in smaller letters, —

BEWARE THE REEFS ON THE NORTH SIDE.
LIE OFF FOR SIGNALS.

Then he came home and beached the boat, and brought Helen his captive.

"Why, it is an English duck!" she cried, and was enraptured.

By this visit to the lagoons, Hazel gathered that this island was a half-way house for migrating birds, especially ducks; and he inferred that the line those vagrants had taken was the shortest way from this island to the nearest land. This was worth knowing, and set his brain working. He begged Helen to watch for the return of the turtle doves (they had all left the island just *before* the rain) and learn, if possible, from what point of the compass they arrived.

The next expedition was undertaken to please Helen; she wished to examine the beautiful creeks and caves on the north side, which they had seen from a distance when they sailed round the island.

They started on foot one delightful day, and walked briskly, for the air, though balmy, was exhilarating. They followed the course of the river till they came to the lake that fed it, and was fed itself by hundreds of little natural gutters down which the hills discharged the rains. This was new to Helen, though not to Hazel. She produced the map, and told the lake slyly that it was incorrect, a little too big. She took some of the water in her hand, sprinkled the lake with it, and called it Hazelmere. They bore a little to the right and proceeded till they found a creek shaped like a wedge, at whose broad end shone an arch of foliage studded with flowers, and the sparkling blue water peeped behind. This was tempting, but the descent was rather hazardous at first; great square blocks of rock, one below another, and these rude steps were coated with mosses of rich hue, but wet and slippery; Hazel began to be alarmed for his companion. However, after one or two difficulties, the fissure opened wider to the sun, and they descended from the slimy rocks into a sloping hot-bed of exotic flowers, and those huge succulent leaves that are the glory of the tropics. The ground was carpeted a yard deep with their luxuriance, and others, more aspiring, climbed the warm sides of the diverging cliffs, just as creepers grow up a wall, lining every crevice as they rose. In this blessed spot, warmed, yet not scorched, by the tropical sun, and fed with trickling waters, was seen what marvels boon Nature can do. Here, our vegetable dwarfs were giants, and our flowers were trees. One lovely giantess of the jasmine tribe, but with flowers shaped like a marigold, and scented like a tube-rose, had a stem as thick as a poplar and carried its thousand buds and amber-colored flowers up eighty feet of broken rock, and planted on every ledge suckers that flowered again, and filled the air with perfume. Another tree about half as high was covered with a cascade of

snow-white tulips, each as big as a small flower-pot, and scented like honeysuckle. An aloe, ten feet high, blossomed in a corner unheeded among loftier beauties. And at the very mouth of the fissure a huge banana leaned across, and flung out its vast leaves, that seemed translucent gold against the sun; under it shone a monstrous cactus in all her pink and crimson glory; and through the maze of color streamed the deep blue of the peaceful ocean, laughing, and catching sunbeams.

Helen leaned against the cliff and quivered with delight and that deep sense of flowers that belongs to your true woman.

Hazel feared she was ill.

"Ill?" said she. "Who *could* be ill here? It is heaven upon earth. Oh, you dears! oh, you loves! And they all seem growing on the sea, and floating in the sun."

"And it is only one of a dozen such," said Hazel. "If you would like to inspect them at your leisure, I'll just run to Palm-tree Point; for my signal is all askew. I saw that as we came along."

Helen assented readily, and he ran off, but left her the provisions. She was not to wait dinner for him.

Helen examined two or three of the flowery fissures, and found fresh beauties in each, and also some English leaves, that gave her pleasure of another kind; and, after she had revelled in the flowers, she examined the shore, and soon discovered that the rocks, which abounded here (though there were also large patches of clear sand), were nearly all pure coral, in great variety. Red coral was abundant; and even the pink coral, to which fashion was just then giving a fictitious value, was there by the ton. This interested her, and so did some beautiful shells that lay sparkling. The time passed swiftly, and she was still busy in her researches, when suddenly it darkened

a little, and, looking back, she saw a white vapor stealing over the cliff, and curling down.

Upon this, she thought it prudent to return to the place where Hazel had left her; the more so as it was near sunset.

The vapor descended and spread, and covered sea and land. Then the sun set: and it was darkness visible. Coming from the south, the sea-fret caught Hazel sooner and in a less favorable situation. Returning from the palm-tree, he had taken the shortest cut through a small jungle, and been so impeded by the scrub, that, when he got clear, the fog was upon him. Between that and the river, he lost his way several times, and did not hit the river till near midnight. He followed the river to the lake, and coasted the lake, and then groped his way towards the creek. But, after a while, every step he took was fraught with danger; and the night was far advanced when he at last hit off the creek, as he thought. He hallooed; but there was no reply; hallooed again, and to his joy, her voice replied; but at a distance. He had come to the wrong creek. She was farther westward. He groped his way westward, and came to another creek. He hallooed to her, and she answered him. But to attempt the descent would have been mere suicide. She felt that herself, and almost ordered him to stay where he was.

"Why, we can talk all the same," said she; "and it is not for long."

It was a curious position, and one typical of the relation between them. So near together, yet the barrier so strong.

"I am afraid you must be very cold," said he.

"Oh, no; I have my sealskin jacket on; and it is so sheltered here. I wish you were as well off."

"You are not afraid to be alone down there?"

"I am not alone when your voice is near me. Now don't you fidget yourself, dear friend. I like these little excitements. I have told you so before. Listen: how calm and silent it all is; the place; the night! The mind seems to fill with great ideas, and to feel its immortality."

She spoke with solemnity, and he heard in silence.

Indeed it was a reverend time and place: the sea, whose loud and penetrating tongue had, in some former age, created the gully where they both sat apart, had of late years receded, and kissed the sands gently that calm night; so gently, that its long low murmur seemed but the echo of tranquillity.

The voices of that pair sounded supernatural, one speaking up, and the other down, the speakers quite invisible.

"Mr. Hazel," said Helen, in a low, earnest voice; "they say that night gives wisdom even to the wise; think now, and tell me your true thoughts. Has the foot of man ever trodden upon this island before?"

There was a silence due to a question so grave, and put with solemnity, at a solemn time, in a solemn place.

At last Hazel's thoughtful voice came down. "The world is very, very, very old. So old, that the words 'ancient history' are a falsehood, and Moses wrote but as yesterday. And man is a very old animal upon this old, old planet; and has been everywhere. I cannot doubt he has been here."

Her voice went up. "But have you seen any signs?"

His voice came down. "I have not looked for them. The bones and the weapons of primeval men are all below earth's surface at this time of day."

There was a dead silence. Then Helen's voice went up again. "But in modern times? Has no man landed here from far-off places, since ships were built?"

The voice came sadly down. "I do not know."

The voice went up. "But think!"

The voice came down. "What calamity can be new in a world so old as this? Everything we can do, and suffer, others of our race have done, and suffered."

The voice went up. "Hush! there's something moving on the sand."

Hazel waited and listened. So did Helen, and her breath came fast; for in the stilly night she heard light but mysterious sounds. Something was moving on the sand very slowly, and softly, but nearer and nearer. Her heart began to leap. She put out her hand instinctively to clutch Mr. Hazel; but he was too far off. She had the presence of mind and the self-denial to disguise her fears; for she knew he would come headlong to her assistance.

She said, in a quavering whisper, "I'm not frightened; only v—ery c—urious."

And now she became conscious that not only one but several things were creeping about.

Presently the creeping ceased, and was followed by a louder and more mysterious noise. In that silent night it sounded like raking and digging. Three or four mysterious visitants seemed to be making graves.

This was too much; especially coming as it did after talk about the primeval dead. Her desire to scream was so strong, and she was so afraid Hazel would break his neck if she relieved her mind in that way, that she actually took her handkerchief and bit it hard.

But this situation was cut short by a beneficent luminary. The sun rose with a magnificent bound — it was his way in that latitude — and everything unpleasant

winced that moment; the fog shivered in its turn, and appeared to open in furrows, as great javelins of golden light shot through it from the swiftly rising orb. Soon, these golden darts increased to streams of potable fire, that burst the fog and illumined the wet sands: and Helen burst out laughing like chanticleer, for this first break of day revealed the sextons that had scared her — three ponderous turtles, crawling, slow and clumsy, back to sea. Hazel joined her, and they soon found what these evil spirits of the island had been at, poor wretches. They had each buried a dozen eggs in the sand: one dozen of which were very soon set boiling. At first, indeed, Helen objected that they had no shells, but Hazel told her she might as well complain of a rose without a thorn. He assured her turtles' eggs were a known delicacy, and very superior to birds' eggs; and so she found them; they were eaten with the keenest relish.

"And now," said Helen, "for my discoveries. First, here are my English leaves, only bigger. I found them on a large tree."

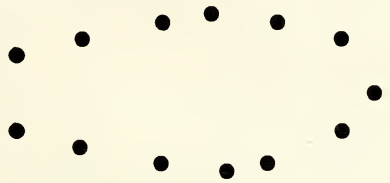
"English leaves!" cried Hazel, with rapture. "Why, it is the caoutchouc."

"Oh, dear," said Helen, disappointed; "I took it for the india-rubber tree."

"It is the india-rubber tree; and I have been hunting for it all over the island in vain, and using wretchedly inferior gums for want of it."

"I'm so glad," said Helen. "And now I have something else to show you: something that curdled my blood. But I dare say I was very foolish." She then took him half across the sand and pointed out to him a number of stones dotted over the sand in a sort of oval. These stones, streaked with sea-grass, and encrusted with small shells, were not at equal distances,

but yet, allowing for gaps, they formed a decided figure. Their outline resembled a great fish wanting the tail.



"Can this be chance?" asked Helen; "oh, if it should be what I fear, and that is — savages!"

Hazel considered it attentively a long time. "Too far at sea for living savages," said he. "And yet it cannot be chance. What on earth is it? It looks Druidical. But how can that be? The island was smaller when these were placed here than it is now." He went nearer and examined one of the stones: then he scraped away the sand from its base, and found it was not shaped like a stone, but more like a whale's rib. He became excited; went on his knees, and tore the sand up with his hands. Then he rose up agitated, and traced the outline again. "Great Heaven!" said he, "why, it is a ship."

"A ship!"

"Ay," said he, standing in the middle of it; "here, beneath our feet, lies man; with his work, and his treasures. This carcass has been here for many a long year; not so very long neither; she is too big for the sixteenth century, and yet she must have been sunk when the island was smaller. I take it to be a Spanish or Portuguese ship: probably one of those treasure ships our commodores, and chartered pirates, and the American buccaneers, used to chase about the seas. Here lie her bones, and the bones of her crew. Your question was

soon answered. All that we can say has been said: can do, has been done; can suffer, has been suffered."

They were silent, and the sunk ship's bones moved them strangely. In their deep isolation from the human race, even the presence of the dead brought humanity somehow nearer to them.

They walked thoughtfully away, and made across the sands for Telegraph Point.

Before they got home, Helen suggested that perhaps, if he were to dig in the ship, he might find something useful.

He shook his head. "Impossible! the iron has all melted away like sugar long before this. Nothing can have survived but gold and silver, and they are not worth picking up, much less digging for; my time is too precious. No, you have found two buried treasures to-day — turtles' eggs, and a ship, freighted, as I think, with what men call the precious metals. Well, the eggs are gold, and the gold is a drug — there it will lie for me."

Both discoveries bore fruits. The ship: — Hazel made a vow that never again should any poor ship lay her ribs on this island for want of warning. He buoyed the reefs. He ran out to White Water Island, and wrote an earnest warning on the black reef, and, this time, he wrote with white on black. He wrote a similar warning, with black on white, at the western extremity of God-send Island.

The eggs: — Hazel watched for the turtles at daybreak; turned one now and then; and fed Helen on the meat or its eggs, morn, noon, and night.

For some time she had been advancing in health and strength. But, now she was all day in the air, she got the full benefit of the wonderful climate, and her health, appetite, and muscular vigor became truly astonishing;

especially under what Hazel called the turtle cure; though, indeed, she was cured before. She ate three good meals a day, and needed them: for she was up with the sun, and her hands and feet were never idle till he set.

Four months on the island had done this. But four months had not shown those straining eyes the white speck on the horizon; the sail, so looked and longed for.

Hazel often walked the island by himself; not to explore, for he knew the place well by this time, but he went his rounds to see that all his signals were in working order.

He went to Mount Lookout one day with this view. It was about an hour before noon. Long before he got to the mountain he had scanned the horizon carefully, as a matter of course; but not a speck. So, when he got there, he did not look seaward, but just saw that his flag-staff was all right, and was about to turn away and go home, when he happened to glance at the water; and there, underneath him, he saw — a ship; standing towards the island.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

He started, and rubbed his eyes, and looked again. It was no delusion. Things never did come as they are expected to come. There was still no doubtful speck on the horizon; but within eight miles of the island — and in this lovely air that looked nearly close — was a ship, under canvas. She bore S.E. from Mount Lookout, and S.S.E. from the east bluff of the island, towards which her course was apparently directed. She had a fair wind, but was not going fast; being heavily laden, and under no press of sail. A keen thrill went through him; and his mind was in a whirl. He ran home with the great news.

But, even as he ran, a cold sickly feeling crawled over him.

"That ship parts her and me."

He resisted the feeling as a thing too monstrous and selfish, and resisted it so fiercely, that, when he got to the slopes and saw Helen busy at her work, he waved his hat and hurrahed again and again, and seemed almost mad with triumph.

Helen stood transfixed; she had never seen him in such a state.

"Good news!" he cried; "great news! A ship in sight! You are rescued!"

Her heart leaped into her mouth.

"A ship!" she screamed. "Where? where?" He came up to her, panting.

"Close under the island. Hid by the bluff; but you will see her in half an hour. God be praised! Get

everything ready to go. Hurrah! this is our last day on the island."

The words were brave, and loud, and boisterous, but the face was pale and drawn, and Helen saw it, and though she bustled and got ready to leave, the tears were in her eyes. But the event was too great to be resisted. A wild excitement grew on them both. They ran about like persons crazed, and took things up, and laid them down again, scarcely knowing what they were doing. But presently they were sobered a little, for the ship did not appear. They ran across the sands, where they could see the bluff; she ought to have passed that half an hour ago.

Hazel thought she must have anchored.

Helen looked at him steadily.

"Dear friend," said she, "are you sure there is a ship at all? Are you not under a delusion? This island fills the mind with fancies. One day I thought I saw a ship sailing in the sky. Ah!" She uttered a faint scream, for, while she was speaking, the bowsprit and jib of a vessel glided past the bluff so closely, they seemed to scrape it, and a ship emerged grandly, and glided along the cliff.

"Are they mad," cried Hazel, "to hug the shore like that? Ah! they have seen my warning."

And it appeared so, for the ship just then came up in the wind several points, and left the bluff dead astern.

She sailed a little way out on that course, and then paid off again, and seemed inclined to range along the coast. But presently she was up in the wind again, and made a greater offing. She was sailed in a strange, vacillating way; but Hazel ascribed this to her people's fear of the reefs he had indicated to all comers. The better to watch her manœuvres, and signal her, if necessary, they both went up to Telegraph Point. They could

not go out to her, being low water. Seen from this height, the working of this vessel was unaccountable. She was to and off the wind as often as if she was drunk herself, or commanded by a drunken skipper. However, she was kept well clear of the home reefs, and made a good offing, and so at last she opened the bay heading N.W., and distant four miles, or thereabouts. Now was the time to drop her anchor. So Hazel worked the telegraph to draw her attention, and waved his hat and hand to her. But the ship sailed on. She yawed immensely, but she kept her course; and when she had gone a mile or two more, the sickening truth forced itself at last upon those eager watchers. She had decided not to touch at the island. In vain their joyful signals. In vain the telegraph. In vain that cry for help upon the eastern cliff: it had saved her, but not pleaded for them. The monsters saw them on the height—their hope, their joy—saw and abandoned them.

They looked at one another with dilating eyes, to read in a human face whether such a deed as this could really be done by man upon his fellow. Then they uttered wild cries to the receding vessel.

Vain, vain, all was in vain.

Then they sat down stupefied, but still glaring at the ship, and each, at the same moment, held out a hand to the other, and they sat hand in hand; all the world to each other just then, for there was the world in sight abandoning them in cold blood.

"Be calm, dear friend," said Helen patiently. "Oh, my poor father!" And her other hand threw her apron over her head, and then came a burst of anguish that no words could utter.

At this Hazel started to his feet in fury.

"Now may the God that made sea and land judge between those miscreants there and you!"

"Be patient," said Helen, sobbing. "Oh, be patient."

"No! I will not be patient," roared Hazel. "Judge thou her cause, O God! each of these tears against a reptile's soul."

And so he stood glaring, and his hair blowing wildly to the breeze; while she sat patiently at his knee.

Presently he began to watch the vessel with a grim and bitter eye. Anon he burst out suddenly, "Aha! that is right. Well steered. — Don't cry, sweet one; our cause is heard. Are they blind? Are they drunk? Are they sick? I see nobody on deck! Perhaps I have been too— God forgive me, the ship's ashore!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Helen looked up; and there was the ship fast, and on her side. She was on the White Water Reef. Not upon the black rocks themselves, but on a part of them that was under water.

Hazel ran down to the beach; and there Helen found him greatly agitated. All his anger was gone; he had but one thought now — to go out to her assistance. But it still wanted an hour to high water, and it was blowing smartly, and there was nearly always a surf upon that reef. What if the vessel should break up, and lives be lost?

He paced the sands like a wild beast in its cage, in an agony of pity, remorse, and burning impatience. His feelings became intolerable; he set his back to the boat, and with herculean strength forced it down a little way to meet the tide. He got logs and put them down for rollers. He strove, he strained, he struggled till his face and hands were purple. And at last he met the flowing tide, and in a moment jumped into the boat, and pushed off. Helen begged with sparkling eyes to be allowed to accompany him.

"What, to a ship smitten with scurvy, or Heaven knows what? Certainly not. Besides, you would be wet through; it is blowing rather fresh, and I shall carry on. Pray for the poor souls I go to help; and for me, who have sinned in my anger."

He hoisted his sail, and ran out.

Helen stood on the bank, and watched him with tender admiration. How good and brave he was! And he could

go into a passion too, when she was wronged, or when he thought she was. Well! she admired him none the less for that. She watched him at first with admiration, but soon with anxiety; for he had no sooner passed North Gate, than the cutter, having both sails set, though reefed, lay down very much, and her hull kept disappearing. Helen felt anxious, and would have been downright frightened, but for her confidence in his prowess.

By and by only her staggering sails were visible; and the sun set ere she reached the creek. The wind declined with the sun, and Helen made two great fires, and prepared food for the sufferers: for she made sure Hazel would bring them off in a few hours more. She promised herself the happiness of relieving the distressed. But to her infinite surprise she found herself almost regretting that the island was likely to be peopled with strangers. No matter, she should sit up for them all night, and be very kind to them, poor things; though they had not been very kind to her.

About midnight the wind shifted to the northwest, and blew hard.

Helen ran down to the shore, and looked seaward. This was a fair wind for Hazel's return; and she began to expect him every hour. But, no; he delayed unaccountably.

And the worst of it was, it began to blow a gale: and this wind sent the sea rolling into the bay in a manner that alarmed her seriously.

The night wore on; no signs of the boat! and now there was a heavy gale outside, and a great sea rolling in, brown and foaming.

Day broke, and showed the sea for a mile or two; the rest was hidden by driving rain.

Helen kneeled on the shore and prayed for him.

Dire misgivings oppressed her. And soon these were

heightened to terror; for the sea began to disgorge things of a kind that had never come ashore before. A great ship's mast came tossing: huge as it was, the waves handled it like a toy. Then came a barrel; then a broken spar. These were but the forerunners of more fearful havoc.

The sea became strewed and literally blackened with fragments; part wreck, part cargo of a broken vessel.

But what was all this compared with the horror that followed?

A black object caught her eye; driven in upon the crest of a wave.

She looked, with her hair flying straight back, and her eyes almost starting from her head.

It was a boat, bottom up; driven on, and tossed like a cork.

It came nearer, nearer, nearer.

She dashed into the water with a wild scream, but a wave beat her backwards on the sand, and, as she rose, an enormous roller lifted the boat upright into the air, and, breaking, dashed it keel downwards on the beach at her side — empty!

CHAPTER XXXV.

Helen uttered a shriek of agony, and her knees smote together, and she would have swooned on the spot but for the wind and the spray that beat against her.

To the fearful stun succeeded the wildest distress. She ran to and fro like some wild animal bereaved; she kept wringing her hands and uttering cries of pity and despair, and went back to the boat a hundred times; it held her by a spell.

It was long before she could think connectedly, and, even then, it was not of herself, nor of her lonely state; but only, Why did she not die with him? Why did she not die instead of him?

He had been all the world to her; and now she knew it. Oh, what a friend, what a champion, what a lover these cruel waves had destroyed!

The morning broke, and still she hovered and hovered about the fatal boat, with great horror-stricken eyes, and hair flying to the breeze, and not a tear. If she could only have smoothed his last moments, have spoken one word into his dying ear! But, no! Her poor hero had died in going to save others; died thinking her as cold as the waters that had destroyed him.

Dead or alive, he was all the world to her now. She went, wailing piteously, and imploring the waves to give her at least his dead body to speak to, and mourn over. But the sea denied her even that dismal consolation.

The next tide brought in a few more fragments of the wreck, but no corpse floated ashore.

Then at last, as the waves once more retired, leaving,

this time, only petty fragments of wreck on the beach, she lifted up her voice, and almost wept her heart out of her body.

Such tears as these are seldom without effect on the mind: and Helen now began to rebel, though faintly, against despair. She had been quite crushed, at first, under the material evidence — the boat driven empty by the very wind and waves that had done the cruel deed. But the heart is averse to believe calamity, and especially bereavement; and very ingenious in arguing against that bitterest of all woes. So she now sat down and brooded, and her mind fastened with pathetic ingenuity on every circumstance that could bear a favorable construction. The mast had not been broken; how, then, had it been lost? The body had not come ashore. He had had time to get to the wreck before the gale from the north came on at all; and why should a fair wind, though powerful, upset the boat? On these slender things she began to build a superstructure of hope; but soon her heart interrupted the reasoning. "What would *he* do in my place? would he sit guessing while hope had a hair to hang by?" That thought struck her like a spur: and in a moment she bounded into action, erect, her lips fixed, and her eye on fire, though her cheek was very pale. She went swiftly to Hazel's store, and searched it; there she found the jib-sail, a boat-hook, some rope, and one little oar, that Hazel was making for her, and had not quite completed. The sight of this, his last work, overpowered her again; and she sat down and took it on her knees, and kissed it, and cried over it. And these tears weakened her for a time. She felt it, and had the resolution to leave the oar behind. A single oar was of no use to row with. She rigged the boat-hook as a mast, and fastened the sail to it; and, with this poor equipment, she actually resolved to put out to sea.

The wind still blew smartly, and there was no blue sky visible.

And now she remembered she had eaten nothing; that would not do. Her strength might fail her. She made ready a meal, and ate it almost fiercely, and by a pure effort of resolution; as she was doing all the rest.

By this time it was nearly high tide. She watched the water creeping up. Will it float the boat? It rises over the keel; two inches, three inches. Five inches water! Now she pushes with all her strength. No; the boat has water in it she had forgotten to bail out. She strained every nerve, but could not move it. She stopped to take breath, and husband her strength. But, when she renewed her efforts, the five inches were four, and she had the misery of seeing the water crawl away by degrees, and leave the boat high and dry.

She sighed, heart-broken, awhile; then went home and prayed.

When she had prayed a long time for strength and wisdom, she lay down for an hour, and tried to sleep, but failed. Then she prepared for a more serious struggle with the many difficulties she had to encounter. Now she thanked God more than ever for the health and rare strength she had acquired in this island: without them she could have done nothing now. She got a clay platter, and baled the vessel nearly dry. She left a little water for ballast. She fortified herself with food, and put provisions and water on board the boat. In imitation of Hazel, she went and got two round logs, and, as soon as the tide crawled up to four inches, she lifted the bow a little, and got a roller under. Then she went to the boat's stern, set her teeth, and pushed with a rush of excitement that gave her almost a man's strength.

The stubborn boat seemed elastic, and all but moved. Then instinct taught her where her true strength lay.

She got to the stern of the boat, and setting the small of her back under the projecting gunwale, she gathered herself together and gave a superb heave, that moved the boat a foot. She followed it up, and heaved again with like effect. Then with a cry of joy, she ran and put down another roller forward. The boat was now on two rollers: one more magnificent heave with all her zeal, and strength, and youth, and the boat glided forward. She turned and rushed at it as it went, and the water deepening, and a gust catching the sail, it went out to sea, and she had only just time to throw herself across the gunwale, panting. She was afloat. The wind was S.W., and before she knew where she was, the boat headed towards the home reefs, and slipped through the water pretty fast, considering how small a sail she carried. She ran to the helm. Alas! the rudder was broken off above the water-line. The helm was a mockery, and the boat running for the reefs. She slacked the sheet, and the boat lost her way, and began to drift with the tide, which, luckily, had not yet turned. It carried her in shore.

Helen cast her eyes around for an expedient, and she unshipped one of the transoms, and by trailing it over the side, and alternately slacking and hauling the sheet, she contrived to make the boat crawl like a winged bird through the western passage. After that it soon got becalmed under the cliff, and drifted into two feet water.

Instantly she tied a rope to the mast, got out into the water, and took the rope ashore. She tied it round a heavy barrel she found there, and set the barrel up, and heaped stones around it and on it, which unfortunately was a long job, though she worked with feverish haste; then she went round the point, sometimes wet and sometimes dry, for the little oar she had left behind, because

it broke her heart to look at. Away with such weakness now! With that oar, his last work, she might steer if she could not row. She got it. She came back to the boat to recommence her voyage.

She found the boat all safe, but in six inches of water, and the tide going out. So ended her voyage: four hundred yards at most, and then to wait another twelve hours for the tide.

It was too cruel: and every hour so precious; for, even if Hazel were alive, he would die of cold and hunger ere she could get to him. She cried like a woman. She persisted like a man.

She made several trips, and put away things in the boat that could possibly be of use — abundant provision, and a keg of water; Hazel's wooden spade to paddle or steer with; his basket of tools, etc. Then she snatched some sleep; but it was broken by sad and terrible dreams: then she waited in an agony of impatience for high water.

We are not always the best judges of what is good for us. Probably these delays saved her own life. She went out at last under far more favorable circumstances — a light westerly breeze, and no reefs to pass through. She was, however, severely incommoded with a ground-swell.

At first she steered with the spade as well as she could; but she found this was not sufficient. The current ran westerly, and she was drifting out of her course. Then she remembered Hazel's lessons, and made shift to fasten the spade to the helm, and then lashed the helm. Even this did not quite do; so she took her little oar, kissed it, cried over it a little, and then pulled manfully with it so as to keep the true course. It was a muggy day, neither wet nor dry. White Water Island was not in sight from Godsend Island; but as soon as

she lost the latter, the former became visible — an ugly grinning reef with an eternal surf on the south and western sides.

Often she left off rowing, and turned to look at it. It was all black and blank, except the white and fatal surf.

When she was about four miles from the nearest part of the reef, there was a rush and bubble in the water, and a great shark came after the boat. Helen screamed, and turned very cold. She dreaded the monster not for what he could do now, but for what he might have done. He seemed to know the boat, he swam so vigilantly behind it. Was he there when the boat upset with Hazel in it? Was it in his greedy maw the remains of her best friend must be sought? Her lips opened, but no sound. She shuddered and hid her face at this awful thought.

The shark followed steadily.

She got to the reef, but did not hit it off as she intended. She ran under its lee, lowered the little sail, and steered the boat into a nick where the shark could hardly follow her.

But he moved to and fro like a sentinel, while she landed in trepidation and secured the boat to the branches of a white coral rock.

She found the place much larger than it looked from Telegraph Point. It was an archipelago of coral reef encrusted here and there with shells. She could not see all over it, where she was, so she made for what seemed the highest part, a bleak, seaweedy mound, with some sandy hillocks about it. She went up to this, and looked eagerly all round.

Not a soul.

She called as loud as her sinking heart would let her.

Not a sound.

She felt very sick, and sat down upon the mound.

When she had yielded awhile to the weakness of her sex, she got up, and was her father's daughter again. She set to work to examine every foot of the reef.

It was no easy task. The rocks were rugged and sharp in places, slippery in others; often she had to go about, and once she fell and hurt her pretty hands and made them bleed; she never looked at them, nor heeded, but got up and sighed at the interruption: then patiently persisted. It took her two hours to examine thus, in detail, one half the island: but at last she discovered something. She saw at the eastern side of the reef a wooden figure of a woman, and, making her way to it, found the figure-head, and a piece of the bow of the ship, with a sail on it, and a yard on that. This fragment was wedged into an angle of the reef, and the seaward edge of it shattered in a way that struck terror to Helen, for it showed her how omnipotent the sea had been. On the reef itself she found a cask with its head stove in, also a little keg, a ship's lantern, and two wooden chests or cases. But what was all this to her?

She sat down again, for her knees failed her. Presently there was a sort of moan near her, and a seal splashed into the water and dived out of her sight. She put her hands on her heart, and bowed her head down, utterly desolate. She sat thus for a long time indeed, until she was interrupted by a most unexpected visitor. Something came sniffing up to her and put a cold nose to her hand. She started violently, and both her hands were in the air in a moment.

It was a dog, a pointer. He whimpered and tried to gambol, but could not manage it; he was too weak. However, he contrived to let her see with the wagging of his tail, and a certain contemporaneous twist of his emaciated body, that she was welcome. But, having performed this ceremony, he trotted feebly away, leaving

her very much startled, and not knowing what to think; indeed, this incident set her trembling all over.

A dog saved from the wreck! Then why not a man? And why not that life? Oh, thought she, would God save that creature, and not pity my poor angel and me?

She got up animated with hope, and recommenced her researches. She now kept at the outward edge of the island, and so went all round till she reached her boat again. The shark was swimming to and fro, waiting for her with horrible pertinacity. She tried to eat a mouthful, but, though she was faint, she could not eat. She drank a mouthful of water, and then went to search the very small portion that remained of the reef, and to take the poor dog home with her, because he she had lost was so good to animals. Only his example is left me, she said; and with that came another burst of sorrow. But she got up and did the rest of her work, crying as she went. After some severe travelling she got near the north-east limit, and in a sort of gully she saw the dog, quietly seated high on his tail. She called him; but he never moved. So, then, she went to him, and, when she got near him, she saw why he would not come. He was watching. Close by him lay the form of a man nearly covered with sea-weed. The feet were visible, and so was the face, the latter deadly pale. It was he. In a moment she was by him, and leaning over him with both hands quivering. Was he dead? No; his eyes were closed; he was fast asleep.

Her hands flew to his face to feel him alive, and then grasped both his hands and drew them up towards her panting bosom; and the tears of joy streamed from her eyes, as she sobbed and murmured over him, she knew not what. At that he awoke and stared at her. He uttered a loud ejaculation of joy and wonder, then taking it all in, burst into tears himself, and fell to kissing her

hands and blessing her. The poor soul had almost given himself up for lost. And to be saved all in a moment, and by her!

They could neither of them speak, but only mingled tears of joy and gratitude.

Hazel recovered himself first; and rising somewhat stiffly, lent her his arm. Her father's spirit went out of her in the moment of victory, and she was all woman, — sweet, loving, clinging woman. She got hold of his hand as well as his arm, and clutched it so tight, her little grasp seemed velvet and steel.

"Let me feel you," said she: "but no words! no words!"

He supported his preserver tenderly to the boat, then, hoisting the sail, he fetched the east side in two tacks, shipped the sail and yard, and also the cask, keg, and boxes. He then put a great quantity of loose oysters on board, each as large as a plate. She looked at him with amazement.

"What!" said she, when he had quite loaded the boat, "only just out of the jaws of death, and yet you can trouble your head about oysters and things."

"Wait till you see what I shall do with them," said he. "These are pearl oysters. I gathered them for *you*, when I had little hope I should ever see you again to give them you."

This was an unlucky speech. The act, that seemed so small and natural a thing to him, the woman's heart measured more correctly. Something rose in her throat; she tried to laugh instead of crying, and so she did both, and went into a violent fit of hysterics that showed how thoroughly her nature had been stirred to its depths. She quite frightened Hazel: and indeed the strength of an excited woman's weakness is sometimes alarming to manly natures.

He did all he could to soothe her; without much success. As soon as she was better he set sail, thinking home was the best place for her. She leant back exhausted, and, after a while, seemed to be asleep. We don't believe she was, but Hazel did; and sat, cold and aching in body, but warm at heart, worshipping her with all his eyes.

At last they got ashore; and he sat by her fire and told her all, while she cooked his supper and warmed clothes at the fire for him.

"The ship," said he, "was a Dutch vessel, bound from Batavia to Callao, that had probably gone on her beam ends, for she was full of water. Her crew had abandoned her; I think they underrated the buoyancy of the ship and cargo. They left the poor dog on board. Her helm was lashed a-weather a couple of turns: but why, I am not seaman enough to say. I boarded her: unshipped my mast, and moored the boat to the ship; fed the poor dog; rummaged in the hold, and contrived to hoist up a small cask of salted beef, and a keg of rum, and some cases of grain and seeds. I managed to slide these on to the reef by means of the mast and oar lashed together. But a roller ground the wreck further on to the reef, and the sudden snap broke the rope, as I suppose, and the boat went to sea. I never knew the misfortune till I saw her adrift. I could have got over that by making a raft; but the gale from the north brought such a sea on us. I saw she must break up, so I got ashore how I could. Ah, I little thought to see your face again, still less that I should owe my life to you."

"Spare me," said Helen, faintly.

"What, must not I thank you even for my life?"

"No. *The account is far from even yet.*"

"You are no arithmetician to say so. What astonishes me most is that you have never once scolded me for all the trouble and anxiety —"

"I am too happy to see you sitting there, to scold you. But, still I do ask you, to leave the sea alone, after this. The treacherous monster! Oh, think what you and I have suffered on it."

She seemed quite worn out. He saw that, and retired for the night, casting one more wistful glance on her. But at that moment she was afraid to look at him. Her heart was welling over with tenderness for the dear friend whose life she had saved.

Next morning Hazel rose at daybreak as usual, but found himself stiff in the joints, and with a pain in his back. The mat that hung at the opening of Helen's cave was not removed as usual. She was on her bed with a violent headache.

Hazel fed Ponto, and corrected him. He was at present a civilized dog; so he made a weak rush at the boobies and noddies directly.

He also smelt Tommy inquisitively, to learn was he an eatable. Tommy somehow divined the end of this sinister curiosity, and showed his teeth.

Then Hazel got a rope, and tied one end round his own waist, and one round Ponto's neck, and at every outbreak of civilization, jerked him sharply on to his back. The effect of this discipline was rapid; Ponto soon found that he must not make war on the inhabitants of the island. He was a docile animal, and, in a very short time, consented to make one of "the happy family," as Hazel called the miscellaneous crew that beset him.

Helen and Hazel did not meet till past noon; and, when they did meet, it was plain she had been thinking a great deal, for her greeting was so shy and restrained as to appear cold and distant to Hazel. He thought to himself, I was too happy yesterday, and she too kind. Of course it could not last.

This change in her seemed to grow rather than dimin-

ish. She carried it so far as to go and almost hide during the working hours. She made off to the jungle, and spent an unreasonable time there. She professed to be collecting cotton, and it must be admitted she brought a good deal home with her. But Hazel could not accept cotton as the only motive for this sudden separation.

He lost the light of her face till the evening. Then matters took another turn: she was too polite. Ceremony and courtesy appeared to be gradually encroaching upon tender friendship and familiarity; yet, now and then, her soft hazel eyes seemed to turn on him in silence, and say, Forgive me all this. Then at those sweet looks, love and forgiveness poured out of his eyes. And then hers sought the ground. And this was generally followed by a certain mixture of stiffness, timidity, and formality, too subtle to describe.

The much-enduring man began to lose patience.

"This is caprice," said he. "Cruel caprice."

Our female readers will probably take a deeper view of it than that! Whatever it was, another change was at hand. Since he was so exposed to the weather on the reef, Hazel had never been free from pain; but he had done his best to work it off. He had collected all the valuables from the wreck, made a new mast, set up a rude capstan to draw the boat ashore, and cut a little dock for her at low water, and clayed it in the full heat of the sun; and, having accomplished this drudgery, he got at last to his labor of love; he opened a quantity of pearl oysters, fed Tommy and the duck with them, and began the great work of lining the cavern with them. The said cavern was somewhat shell-shaped, and his idea was to make it out of a gloomy cavern into a vast shell, lined entirely, roof and sides, with glorious, sweet, prismatic, mother-of-pearl, fresh from ocean. Well, one morning, while

Helen was in the jungle, he made a cement of guano, sand, clay, and water, nipped some shells to a shape with the pincers, and cemented them neatly, like mosaic almost; but in the middle of his work he was cut down by the disorder he had combated so stoutly. He fairly gave in, and sat down groaning with pain. And in this state Helen found him.

"Oh, what is the matter?" said she.

He told her the truth, and said he had violent pains in the back and head. She did not say much, but she turned pale. She bustled and lighted a great fire, and made him lie down by it. She propped his head up; she set water on to boil for him, and would not let him move for anything; and all the time her features were brimful of the liveliest concern. He could not help thinking how much better it was to be ill and in pain, and have her so kind, than to be well, and see her cold and distant. Towards evening he got better, or rather he mistook an intermission for cure, and retired to his boat; but she made him take her rug with him; and, when he was gone, she could not sleep for anxiety; and it cut her to the heart to think how poorly he was lodged, compared with her.

Of all the changes fate could bring, this she had never dreamed of, that she should be so robust, and he should be sick and in pain.

She passed an uneasy, restless night, and long before morning she awoke for the sixth or seventh time, and she awoke with a misgiving in her mind, and some sound ringing in her ears. She listened and heard nothing; but in a few minutes it began again.

It was Hazel talking, talking in a manner so fast, so strange, so loud, that it made her blood run cold. It was the voice of Hazel, but not his mind.

She drew near, and to her dismay, found him fever-

stricken, and pouring out words with little sequence. She came close to him and tried to soothe him, but he answered her quite at random, and went on flinging out the strangest things in stranger order. She trembled and waited for a lull, hoping then to soothe him with soft words and tones of tender pity.

"*Dens and caves!*" he roared, answering an imaginary detractor. "Well, never mind, love shall make that hole in the rock a palace for a queen; for *a* queen? For *the* queen." Here he suddenly changed characters and fancied he was interpreting the discourse of another. "He means the Queen of the Fairies," said he, patronizingly: then, resuming his own character with loud defiance, "I say her chamber shall outshine the glories of the Alhambra, as far as the lilies outshone the artificial glories of King Solomon. Oh, mighty Nature, let others rely on the painter, the gold-beater, the carver of marble, come you and help me adorn the temple of my beloved. Amen."

(The poor soul thought, by the sound of his own words, it must be a prayer he had uttered.)

And now Helen, with streaming eyes, tried to put in a word, but he stopped her with a wild Hush! and went off into a series of mysterious whisperings. "Make no noise, please, or we shall frighten her. There — that is her window — no noise, please! I've watched and waited four hours, just to see her sweet, darling shadow on the blinds, and shall I lose it for your small talk? all paradoxes and platitudes: excuse my plain speaking — Hush! here it comes — her shadow — hush — how my heart beats. It is gone. — So now" (speaking out) "good-night, base world! Do you hear? you company of liars, thieves, and traitors, called the world, go and sleep if you can. I *shall* sleep: because my conscience is clear. *False accusations!* Who can help them? They

are the act of others. Read of Job, and Paul, and Joan of Arc. No, no, no, no; I didn't say read 'em *out* with those stentorian lungs. I must be allowed a *little* sleep, a man that wastes the midnight oil, yet brushes the early dew. Good-night."

He turned round and slept for several hours as he supposed; but in reality he was silent for just three seconds. "Well," said he, "and is a gardener a man to be looked down upon by upstarts? When Adam delved and Eve span, where was then the gentleman? Why, where the spade was. Yet I went through the Heralds' College and not one of our mushroom aristocracy ('bloated' I object to; they don't eat half as much as their footmen) had a spade for a crest. There's nothing ancient west of the Caspian. Well, all the better. For there's no fool like an old fool. A spade's a spade for a' that, an a' that, an a' that, an a' that, — an a' that, — an a' that. Hallo! Stop that man; he's gone off on his cork leg, of a' that, on a' that, — and it's my wish to be quiet. Allow me respectfully to observe," said he, striking off suddenly into an air of vast politeness, "that man requires change. I've done a jolly good day's work with the spade for this old Buffer, and now the intellect claims its turn. The mind retires above the noisy world to its Acropolis, and there discusses the great problem of the day; the Insular Enigma. To be or not to be, that is the question, I believe. No, it is not. That is fully discussed elsewhere. Hum! To diffuse — intelligence — from a fixed island — over one hundred leagues of water.

"It's a stinger. But I can't complain. I had read Lempriere, and Smith, and Bryant, and mythology in general; yet I must go and fall in love with the Sphinx. Men are so vain. Vanity whispered, She will set you a light one; Why is a cobbler like a king, for instance? She is not in love with you, ye fool, if you are with her.

The harder the riddle, the higher the compliment the Sphinx pays you. That is the way all sensible men look at it. She is not the Sphinx: she is an angel, and I call her my Lady Caprice. *Hate her for being Caprice?* You incorrigible muddle head. Why, I love Caprice for being her shadow. Poor impotent love that can't solve a problem. The only one she ever set me. I've gone about it like a fool. What is the use of putting up little bits of telegraphs on the island? I'll make a kite a hundred feet high, get five miles of rope ready against the next hurricane; and then I'll rub it with phosphorus and fly it. But what can I fasten it to? No tree would hold it. Dunce! To the island itself, of course. And now go to Stantle, Magg, Milton, and Copestake for one thousand yards of silk — *Money! money! money!* Well, give them a mortgage on the island and a draft on the galleon. Now stop the pitch fountain, and bore a hole near it; fill fifty balloons with gas, inscribe them with the latitude and longitude, fly them, and bring all the world about our ears.

"The problem is solved. It is solved, and I am destroyed. She leaves me; she thinks no more of me. Her heart is in England."

Then he muttered for a long time unintelligibly; and Helen ventured near, and actually laid her hand on his brow to soothe him. But suddenly his muttering ceased, and he seemed to be puzzling hard over something.

The result came out in a clear articulate sentence, that made Helen recoil, and holding by the mast, cast an indescribable look of wonder and dismay on the speaker.

The words that so staggered her were these, to the letter:

"She says she hates reptiles. Yet she marries Arthur Wardlaw."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The very name of Arthur Wardlaw startled Helen, and made her realize how completely her thoughts had been occupied with another.

But add to that the strange and bitter epigram! Or was it a mere fortuitous concourse of words?

She was startled, amazed, confounded, puzzled. And, ere she could recover her composure, Hazel was back to his problem again: but no longer with the same energy. He said in a faint and sleepy voice: "'He maketh the winds His messengers, and flames of fire His ministers.' Ah! if I could do that! Well, why not? I can do anything she bids me —

'Græculus esuriens cœlum jusseris ibit.'"

And soon after this doughty declaration he dozed off, and forgot all his troubles for awhile.

The sun rose, and still he slept, and Helen watched him with undisguised tenderness in her face; undisguised now that he could not see it.

Ere long she had companions in her care. Ponto came out of his den, and sniffed about the boat; and then began to scratch it, and whimper for his friend. Tommy swam out of the sea, came to the boat, discovered, Heaven knows how, that his friend was there: and, in the way of noises, did everything but speak. The sea-birds followed and fluttered here and there in their erratic way, with now and then a peck at each other. All animated nature seemed to be uneasy at this eclipse of their Hazel.

At last Tommy raised himself quite perpendicular, in a vain endeavor to look into the boat, and invented a whine in the minor key, which tells on dogs: it set Ponto off in a moment; he sat upon his tail, and delivered a long and most deplorable howl.

"Everything loves him," thought Helen.

With Ponto's music Hazel awoke, and found her watching him; he said, softly: "Miss Rolleston! There is nothing the matter, I hope. Why am I not up and getting things for your breakfast?"

"Dear friend," said she, "why you are not doing things for me and forgetting yourself, as usual, is because you have been very ill. And I am your nurse. Now tell me what I shall get you. Is there nothing you could fancy?"

No; he had no appetite; she was not to trouble about him. And then he tried to get up; but that gave him such a pain in his loins, he was fain to lie down again. So then he felt that he had got rheumatic fever. He told her so; but seeing her sweet, anxious face, begged her not to be alarmed — he knew what to take for it. Would she be kind enough to go to his arsenal and fetch some specimens of bark she would find there, and also the keg of rum? She flew at the word, and soon made him an infusion of the barks in boiling water; to which the rum was added. His sweet nurse administered this from time to time. The barks used were of the cassia tree, and a wild citron tree. Cinchona did not exist in this island, unfortunately. But with these inferior barks they held the fever in check. Still the pain was obstinate, and cost Helen many a sigh; for if she came softly, she could often hear him moan; and the moment he heard her foot, he set to and whistled for a blind; with what success may be imagined. She would have bought those pains, or a portion of them; ay, and paid a heavy price for them.

But pain, like everything, intermits, and in those blessed intervals his mind was more active than ever, and ran a great deal upon what he called the Problem.

But she, who had set it him, gave him little encouragement now to puzzle over it.

The following may serve as a specimen of their conversation on that head.

"The air of this island," said he, "gives one a sort of vague sense of mental power. It leads to no result in my case; still it is an agreeable sensation to have it floating across my mind that some day I shall solve the Great Problem. Ah! if I was only an inventor!"

"And so you are."

"No, no," said Hazel, disclaiming as earnestly as some people claim; "I do things that look like acts of invention, but they are acts of memory. I could show you plates and engravings of all the things I have seemed to invent. A man who studies books instead of skimming them, can cut a dash in a desert island, until the fatal word goes forth — invent; and then you find him out."

"I am sure I wish I had never said the fatal word. You will never get well if you puzzle your brain over impossibilities."

"Impossibilities! But is not that begging the question? The measure of impossibilities is lost in the present age. I propose a test. Let us go back a century, and suppose that three problems were laid before the men of that day, and they were asked to decide which is the most impossible: 1st, to diffuse intelligence from a fixed island over a hundred leagues of water: 2d, to make the sun take in thirty seconds likenesses more exact than any portrait-painter ever took — likenesses that can be sold for a shilling at fifty per cent profit: 3d, for New York and London to exchange words by wire so much faster than the earth can turn, that London

shall tell New York at ten on Monday morning what was the price of consols at one o'clock Monday afternoon."

"That is a story," said Helen, with a look of angelic reproach.

"I accept that reply," said Hazel. "As for me, I have got a smattering of so many subjects, all full of incredible truths, that my faith in the impossibility of anything is gone. Ah! if James Watt was only here instead of John Hazel — James Watt from the Abbey, with a head as big as a pumpkin — he would not have gone groping about the island, writing on rocks, and erecting signals. No; he would have had some grand and bold idea worthy of the proposition."

"Well, so I think," said Helen, archly: "that great man with a great head would have begun — by making a kite a hundred yards high."

"Would he? Well, he was quite capable."

"Yes; and rubbed it with phosphorus, and flown it in the first tempest, and made the string fast to — the island itself."

"Well, that is an idea," said Hazel, staring; "rather hyperbolical, I fear. But after all, it is an idea."

"Or else," continued Helen, "he would weave a thousand yards of some light fabric, and make balloons; then he would stop the pitch-fountain, bore a hole in the rock near it, and so get the gas, fill the balloons, inscribe them with our sad story, and our latitude and longitude, and send them flying all over the ocean — there!"

Hazel was amazed.

"I resign my functions to you," said he. "What imagination! What invention!"

"Oh, dear, no," said Helen, slyly; "acts of memory sometimes pass for invention, you know. Shall I tell you? When first you fell ill, you were rather light-

headed, and uttered the strangest things. They would have made me laugh heartily, only I couldn't — for crying. And you said that about kites and balloons, every word."

"Did I? Then I have most brains when I have least reason."

"Ay," said Helen, "and other strange things — very strange and bitter things. One I should like to ask you about, what on earth you could mean by it; but perhaps you meant nothing, after all."

"I'll soon tell you," said Hazel; but he took the precaution to add, "Provided I know what it means myself."

She looked at him, steadily, and was on the point of seeking the explanation so boldly offered; but her own courage failed her. She colored and hesitated.

"I shall wait," said she, "till you are quite, quite well. That will be soon, I hope; only you must be good and obey my prescriptions. Cultivate patience; it is a wholesome plant; bow the pride of that intellect, which you see a fever can lay low in an hour; aspire no more beyond the powers of man. Here we shall stay, unless Providence sends us a ship. I have ceased to repine, and don't you begin. Dismiss that problem altogether; see how hot it has made your poor brow. Be good now, and dismiss it; or else do as I do — fold it up, put it quietly away in a corner of your mind, and, when you least expect, it will pop out solved."

(Oh, comfortable doctrine! But how about Jamie Watt's headaches? And why are the signs of hard thought so much stronger in his brow and face than in Shakespeare's? Mercy on us, there is another problem.)

Hazel smiled, well pleased, and leaned back, soothed, silenced, subdued, by her soft voice, and the exquisite touch of her velvet hand on his hot brow; for, woman-

like, she laid her hand like down on that burning brow to aid her words in soothing it. Nor did it occur to him just then that this admonition delivered with a kind maternal hand, maternal voice, came from the same young lady who had flown at him like a wildcat with this very problem in her mouth. She mesmerized him, problem and all; he subsided into a complacent languor, and at last went to sleep, thinking only of her. But the topic had entered his mind too deeply to be finally dismissed. It returned next day, though in a different form. You must know that Hazel, as he lay on his back in the boat, had often, in a half-drowsy way, watched the effect of the sun upon the boat's mast; it now stood, a bare pole, and at certain hours acted like the needle of a dial, by casting a shadow on the sands. Above all, he could see pretty well, by means of this pole and its shadow, when the sun attained its greatest elevation. He now asked Miss Rolleston to assist him in making this observation exactly.

She obeyed his instructions, and the moment the shadow reached its highest angle, and showed the minutest symptom of declension, she said, "Now," and Hazel called out in a loud voice, —

"Noon!"

"And forty-nine minutes past eight at Sydney," said Helen, holding out her chronometer; for she had been sharp enough to get it ready of her own accord.

Hazel looked at her and at the watch with amazement and incredulity.

"What?" said he. "Impossible. You can't have kept Sydney time all this while."

"And pray why not?" said Helen. "Have you forgotten that once somebody praised me for keeping Sydney time; it helped you, somehow or other, to know where we were?"

"And so it will now," cried Hazel, exultingly. "But no! it is impossible. We have gone through scenes that — You can't have wound that watch up without missing a day."

"Indeed, but I have," said Helen. "Not wind my watch up! Why, if I was dying I should wind my watch up. See, it requires no key; a touch or two of the fingers, and it is done. Oh, I am remarkably constant in all my habits; and this is an old friend I never neglect. Do you remember that terrible night in the boat, when neither of us expected to see the morning — oh, how good and brave you were! — well, I remember winding it up that night. I kissed it, and bade it good-by; but I never dreamed of not winding it up because I was going to be killed. What! am I not to be praised again, as I was on board ship? Stingy! can't afford to praise one twice for the same thing."

"Praised!" cried Hazel, excitedly: "worshipped, you mean. Why, we have got the longitude by means of your chronometer. It is wonderful! It is providential! It is the finger of Heaven! Pen and ink, and let me work it out."

In his excitement he got up without assistance, and was soon busy calculating the longitude of Godsend Isle.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"THERE," said he. "Now the latitude I must guess at by certain combinations. In the first place the slight variation in the length of the days. Then I must try and make a rough calculation on the sun's parallax. And then my botany will help me a little; spices furnish a clew; there are one or two that will not grow outside the tropic. It was the longitude that beat me, and now we have conquered it. Hurrah! now I know what to diffuse, and in what direction; east south-east; the ducks have shown me that much. So there's the first step towards the impossible problem."

"Very well," said Helen; "and I am sure one step is enough for one day. I forbid you the topic for twelve hours at least. I detest it because it always makes your poor head so hot."

"What on earth does that matter?" said Hazel, impetuously, and almost crossly.

"Come, come, come, sir," said Helen, authoritatively; "it matters to me."

But when she saw that he could think of nothing else, and that opposition irritated him, she had the tact and good sense not to strain her authority, nor to irritate her subject.

Hazel spliced a long, fine-pointed stick to the mast-head, and set a plank painted white with guano at right angles to the base of the mast; and so whenever the sun attained his meridian altitude, went into a difficult and subtle calculation to arrive at the latitude, or as near it as he could without proper instruments; and he brooded

and brooded over his discovery of the longitude, but unfortunately he could not advance. In some problems the first step once gained leads, or at least points, to the next; but to know whereabouts they were, and to let others know it, were two difficulties heterogeneous and distinct.

Having thought and thought till his head was dizzy; at last he took Helen's advice, and put it by for awhile. He set himself to fit and number a quantity of pearl oyster shells, so that he might be able to place them at once, when he should be able to recommence his labor of love in the cavern.

One day Helen had left him so employed, and was busy cooking the dinner at her own place, but, mind you, with one eye on the dinner and another on her patient, when suddenly she heard him shouting very loud, and ran out to see what was the matter.

He was roaring like mad, and whirling his arms over his head like a demented windmill.

She ran to him.

"Eureka! eureka!" he shouted, in furious excitement.

"Oh, dear!" cried Helen, "never mind." She was all against her patient exciting himself.

But he was exalted beyond even her control. "Crown me with laurel," he cried; "I have solved the problem:" and up went his arms.

"Oh, is that all?" said she, calmly.

"Get me two squares of my parchment," cried he; "and some of the finest gut."

"Will not after dinner do?"

"No; certainly not," said Hazel, in a voice of command. "I wouldn't wait a moment for all the flesh-pots of Egypt."

Then she went like the wind and fetched them.

"Oh, thank you! thank you! Now I want — let me

see — ah, there's an old rusty hoop that was washed ashore, on one of that ship's casks. I put it carefully away; how the unlikeliest things come in useful soon or late!"

She went for the hoop, but not so rapidly, for here it was that the first faint doubt of his sanity came in. However, she brought it, and he thanked her.

"And now," said he. "while I prepare the intelligence, will you be so kind as to fetch me the rushes."

"The what?" said Helen, in growing dismay.

"The rushes! I'll tell you where to find some."

Helen thought the best thing was to temporize. Perhaps he would be better after eating some wholesome food. "I'll fetch them directly after dinner," said she. "But it will be spoiled if I leave it for long; and I do so want it to be nice for you to-day."

"Dinner?" cried Hazel. "What do I care for dinner now? I am solving my problem. I'd rather go without dinner for years than interrupt a great idea. Pray let dinner take its chance, and obey me for once."

"For once?" said Helen, and turned her mild hazel eyes on him with such a look of gentle reproach.

"Forgive me! But don't take me for a child, asking you for a toy; I am a poor crippled inventor, who sees daylight. Oh, I am on fire; and, if you want me not to go into a fever, why, get me my rushes."

"Where shall I find them?" said Helen, catching fire at him.

"Go to where your old hut stood, and follow the river about a furlong; you will find a bed of high rushes: cut me a good bundle, cut them below the water, choose the stoutest. Here is a pair of shears I found in the ship."

She took the shears and went swiftly across the sands and up the slope. He watched her with an admiring

eye; and well he might, for it was the very poetry of motion. Hazel in his hours of health had almost given up walking; he ran from point to point, without fatigue or shortness of breath. Helen, equally pressed for time, did not run; but she went almost as fast. By rising with the dawn, by three meals a day of animal food, by constant work, and heavenly air, she was in a condition women rarely attain to. She was *trained.* Ten miles was no more to her than ten yards. And, when she was in a hurry, she got over the ground by a grand but feminine motion not easy to describe. It was a series of smooth undulations, not vulgar strides, but swift rushes, in which the loins seemed to propel the whole body, and the feet scarcely to touch the ground: it was the vigor and freedom of a savage, with the grace of a lady.

And so it was she swept across the sands and up the slope,

Et vera incessu patuit Dea.

While she was gone, Hazel cut two little squares of seals' bladder, one larger than the other. On the smaller he wrote: "An English lady wrecked on an island. W. longitude 103 deg. 30 min. S. latitude between the 33d and 26th parallels. Haste to her rescue." Then he folded this small, and enclosed it in the larger slip, which he made into a little bag, and tied the neck extremely tight with fine gut, leaving a long piece of the gut free.

And now Helen came gliding back, as she went, and brought him a large bundle of rushes.

Then he asked her to help him fasten these rushes round the iron hoop.

"It must not be done too regularly," said he; "but so as to look as much like a little bed of rushes as possible."

Helen was puzzled still, but interested. So she set to

work, and, between them, they fastened rushes all round the hoop, although it was a large one.

But, when it was done, Hazel said they were too bare.

"Then we will fasten another row," said Helen, good-humoredly. And without more ado, she was off to the river again.

When she came back, she found him up, and he said the great excitement had cured him — such power has the brain over the body. This convinced her he had really hit upon some great idea. And, when she had made him eat his dinner by her fire, she asked him to tell her all about it.

But, by a natural reaction, the glorious and glowing excitement of mind, that had battled his very rheumatic pains, was now followed by doubt and dejection.

"Don't ask me yet," he sighed. "Theory is one thing; practice is another. We count without our antagonists; I forgot they will set their wits against mine: and they are many, I am but one. And I have been so often defeated. And, do you know, I have observed that whenever I say beforehand, now I am going to do something clever, I am always defeated. Pride really goes before destruction, and vanity before a fall."

The female mind, rejecting all else, went like a needle's point at one thing in this explanation. "Our antagonists? why, what antagonists have we?"

"The messengers," said Hazel, with a groan. "The aërial messengers."

That did the business. Helen dropped the subject with almost ludicrous haste; and, after a few commonplace observations, made a nice comfortable dose of grog and bark for him. This she administered as an independent transaction, and not at all by way of comment on his antagonists, the aërial messengers.

It operated unkindly for her purpose: it did him so

much good, that he lifted up his dejected head, and his eyes sparkled again, and he set to work, and, by sunset, prepared two more bags of bladder with inscriptions inside, and long tails of fine gut hanging. He then set to work, and, with fingers far less adroit than hers, fastened another set of rushes round the hoop. He set them less evenly, and some of them not quite perpendicular; and, while he was fumbling over this, and examining the effect with paternal glances, Helen's hazel eye dwelt on him with furtive pity; for, to her, this girdle of rushes was now an instrument that bore an ugly likeness to the sceptre of straw, with which vanity run to seed sways imaginary kingdoms in Bedlam or Bicêtre.

And yet he was better. He walked about the cavern and conversed charmingly; he was dictionary, essayist, *raconteur*, anything she liked; and, as she prudently avoided and ignored the one fatal topic, it was a delightful evening: her fingers were as busy as his tongue: and, when he retired, she presented him the fruits of a fortnight's work, a glorious wrapper made of fleecy cotton enclosed in a plaited web of flexible and silky grasses. He thanked her, and blessed her, and retired for the night.

About midnight she awoke and felt uneasy: so she did what since his illness she had done a score of times without his knowledge, she stole from her lair to watch him.

She found him wrapped in her present, which gave her great pleasure; and sleeping like an infant, which gave her joy. She eyed him eloquently for a long time; and then very timidly put out her hand, and, in her quality of nurse, laid it lighter than down upon his brow.

The brow was cool, and a very slight moisture on it showed the fever was going, or gone.

She folded her arms and stood looking at him; and she thought of all they two had done and suffered together. Her eyes absorbed him, devoured him. The time flew by unheeded. It was so sweet to be able to set her face free from its restraint, and let all its sunshine beam on him: and even when she retired at last, those light hazel eyes, that could flash fire at times, but were all dove-like now, hung and lingered on him as if they could never look at him enough.

Half an hour before daybreak she was awakened by the dog howling piteously. She felt a little uneasy at that: not much. However she got up, and issued from her cavern, just as the sun showed his red eye above the horizon. She went towards the boat as a matter of course. She found Ponto tied to the helm: the boat was empty, and Hazel nowhere to be seen.

She uttered a scream of dismay.

The dog howled and whined louder than ever.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Wardlaw senior was not what you would call a tender-hearted man: but he was thoroughly moved by General Rolleston's distress, and by his fortitude. The gallant old man! Landing in England one week, and going back to the Pacific the next! Like goes with like; and Wardlaw senior, energetic and resolute himself, though he felt for his son, stricken down by grief, gave his heart to the more valiant distress of his contemporary. He manned and victualled the Springbok for a long voyage, ordered her to Plymouth, and took his friend down to her by train.

They went out to her in a boat. She was a screw steamer, that could sail nine knots an hour without burning a coal. As she came down the Channel, the general's trouble got to be well known on board her, and, when he came out of the harbor, the sailors by an honest, hearty impulse, that did them credit, waited for no orders, but manned the yards to receive him with the respect due to his services and his sacred calamity.

On getting on board, he saluted the captain and the ship's company with sad dignity, and retired to his cabin with Mr. Wardlaw. There the old merchant forced on him by way of loan seven hundred pounds, chiefly in gold and silver, telling him there was nothing like money, go where you will. He then gave him a number of notices he had printed, and a paper of advice and instructions: it was written in his own large, clear, formal hand.

General Rolleston tried to falter out his thanks. John Wardlaw interrupted him.

"Next to you I am her father; am I not?"

"You have proved it."

"Well, then. However, if you do find her, as I pray to God you may, I claim the second kiss, mind that: not for myself, though; for my poor Arthur, that lies on a sick-bed for her."

General Rolleston assented to that in a broken voice. He could hardly speak.

And so they parted: and that sad parent went out to the Pacific.

To him it was indeed a sad and gloomy voyage; and the hope with which he went on board oozed gradually away as the ship traversed the vast tracts of ocean. One immensity of water to be passed before that other immensity could be reached, on whose vast, uniform surface the search was to be made.

To abridge this gloomy and monotonous part of our tale, suffice it to say that he endured two months of water and infinity ere the vessel, fast as she was, reached Valparaiso. Their progress, however, had been more than once interrupted to carry out Wardlaw's instructions. The poor general himself had but one idea; to go and search the Pacific with his own eyes; but Wardlaw, more experienced, directed him to overhaul every whaler and coasting vessel he could, and deliver printed notices; telling the sad story, and offering a reward for any positive information, good or bad, that should be brought in to his agent at Valparaiso. Acting on these instructions they had overhauled two or three coasting vessels as they steamed up from the Horn. They now placarded the port of Valparaiso, and put the notices on board all vessels bound westward; and the captain of the Springbok spoke to the skippers in the port. But they all shook their heads, and could hardly be got to give their minds seriously to the inquiry when

they heard in what water the cutter was last seen, and on what course.

One old skipper said, "Look on Juan Fernandez, and then at the bottom of the Pacific; but the sooner you look *there* the less time you will lose."

From Valparaiso they ran to Juan Fernandez, which indeed seemed the likeliest place, if she was alive.

When the larger island of that group, the island dear alike to you who read, and to us who write, this tale, came in sight, the father's heart began to beat higher.

The ship anchored and took in coal, which was furnished at a wickedly high price by Mr. Joshua Fullalove, who had virtually purchased the island from Chili, having got it on lease for longer than the earth itself is to last, we hear.

And now Rolleston found the value of Wardlaw's loan; it enabled him to prosecute his search through the whole group of islands; and he did hear at last of three persons, who had been wrecked on Masa Fuero, one of them a female. He followed this up, and at last discovered the parties. He found them to be Spaniards, and the woman smoking a pipe.

After this bitter disappointment he went back to the ship, and she was to weigh her anchor next morning.

But while General Rolleston was at Masa Fuero, a small coasting vessel had come in, and brought a strange report at second-hand, that in some degree unsettled Captain Moreland's mind, and, being hotly discussed on the forecastle, set the ship's company in a ferment.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Hazel had risen an hour before dawn, for reasons well known to himself. He put on his worst clothes, and a leathern belt, his little bags round his neck, and took his bundle of rushes in his hand. He also provided himself with some pieces of raw fish and fresh oyster; and, thus equipped, went up through Terrapin Wood, and got to the neighborhood of the lagoons before daybreak.

There was a heavy steam on the water, and nothing else to be seen. He put the hoop over his head and walked into the water, not without an internal shudder, it looked so cold.

But, instead of that, it was very warm, unaccountably warm. He walked in up to his middle and tied his iron hoop to his belt, so as to prevent it sinking too deep. This done, he waited motionless, and seemed a little bed of rushes. The sun rose, and the steam gradually cleared away, and Hazel, peering through a hole or two he had made expressly in his bed of rushes, saw several ducks floating about, and one in particular, all purple, without a speck but his amber eye. He contrived to detach a piece of fish, that soon floated to the surface near him. But no duck moved towards it. He tried another, and another; then a mallard he had not observed swam up from behind him, and was soon busy pecking at it within a yard of him. His heart beat; he glided slowly and cautiously forward till the bird was close to the rushes.

Hazel stretched out his hand with the utmost care, caught hold of the bird's feet, and dragged him sharply under the water, and brought him up within the circle

HAZEL THREW HIS CAPTIVE UP IN THE AIR.

of the rushes. He quacked and struggled. Hazel soused him under directly, and so quenched the sound; then he glided slowly to the bank, so slowly that the rushes merely seemed to drift ashore. This he did, not to create suspicion, and so spoil the next attempt. As he glided, he gave his duck air every now and then, and soon got on terra firma. By this time he had taught the duck not to quack, or he would get soused and held under. He now took the long gut-end and tied it tight round the bird's leg, and so fastened the bag to him. Even while he was effecting this, a posse of ducks rose at the west end of the marsh, and took their flight from the island. As they passed Hazel threw his captive up in the air; and such was the force of example, aided, perhaps, by the fright the captive had received, that Hazel's bird instantly joined these travellers, rose with them into the high currents, and away, bearing the news eastward upon the wings of the wind. Then Hazel returned to the pool, and twice more he was so fortunate as to secure a bird, and launch him into space.

So hard is it to measure the wit of man, and to define his resources. The problem was solved; the aërial messengers were on the wing, diffusing over hundreds of leagues of water the intelligence that an English lady had been wrecked on an unknown island, in longitude 103° 30′ west, and between the 33d and 26th parallels of south latitude; and calling good men and ships to her rescue for the love of God.

CHAPTER XL.

And now for the strange report that landed at Juan Fernandez while General Rolleston was searching Masa Fuero.

The coaster, who brought it ashore, had been in company, at Valparaiso, with a whaler from Nantucket, who told him he had fallen in with a Dutch whaler out at sea, and distressed for water; he had supplied the said Dutchman, who had thanked him, and given him a runlet of Hollands, and had told him in conversation that he had seen land and a river reflected on the sky, in waters where no land was marked on the chart; namely, somewhere between Juan Fernandez and Norfolk Island; and that, believing this to be the reflection of a part of some island near at hand, and his water being low, though not at that time run out, he had gone considerably out of his course in hopes of finding this watered island, but could see nothing of it. Nevertheless, as his grandfather, who had been sixty years at sea, and logged many wonderful things, had told him the sky had been known to reflect both ships and land at a great distance, he fully believed there was an island somewhere in that longitude, not down on any chart: an island wooded and watered.

This tale soon boarded the Springbok, and was hotly discussed on the forecastle. It came to Captain Moreland's ears, and he examined the skipper of the coasting smack. But this examination elicited nothing new, inasmuch as the skipper had the tale only at third-hand. Captain Moreland, however, communicated it to General Rolleston on his arrival, and asked him whether he

thought it worth while to deviate from their instructions upon information of such a character. Rolleston shook his head. "An island reflected in the sky!"

"No, sir: a portion of an island containing a river."

"It is clearly a fable," said Rolleston, with a sigh.

"What is a fable, general?"

"That the sky can reflect terrestrial objects."

"Oh, there I can't go with you. The phenomenon is rare, but it is well established. Suppose we catechise the forecastle. Hy! Fok'sel!"

"Sir!"

"Send a man aft: the oldest seaman aboard."

"Ay, ay, sir."

There was some little delay; and then a sailor of about sixty slouched aft, made a sea scrape, and, removing his cap entirely, awaited the captain's commands.

"My man," said the captain, "I want you to answer a question. Do you believe land and ships have ever been seen in the sky, reflected?"

"A many good seamen holds to that, sir," said the sailor cautiously.

"Is it the general opinion of seamen before the mast? Come, tell us. Jack's as good as his master in these matters."

"Couldn't say for boys and lubbers, sir. But I never met a full-grown seaman as denied that there. Sartainly few has seen it; but all of 'em has seen them as has seen it; ships, and land, too, but mostly ships. Hows'ever, I had a messmate once as was sailing past a rock they called Ailsa Craig, and saw a regiment of soldiers marching in the sky. Logged it, did the mate; and them soldiers was a-marching between two towns in Ireland at that very time."

"There, you see, General," said Captain Moreland.

"But this is all second-hand," said General Rolleston,

with a sigh; "and I have learned how everything gets distorted in passing from one to another."

"Ah," said the captain, "we can't help that; the thing is rare. I never saw it for one; and I suppose you never *saw* a phenomenon of the kind, Isaac?"

"Han't I!" said Isaac grimly. Then, with sudden and not very reasonable heat, "D—— my eyes and limbs if I han't seen the Peak o' Teneriffe in the sky topsy turvy, and as plain as I see that there cloud there" (pointing upwards).

"Come," said Moreland; "now we are getting to it. Tell us all about that."

"Well, sir," said the seaman, "I don't care to larn them as laughs at everything they han't seen in may-be a dozen voyages at most; but you knows me, and I knows you; though you command the ship, and I work before the mast. Now I axes you, sir, should you say Isaac Aiken was the man to take a sugar-loaf, or a cocked-hat, for the Peak o' Teneriffe?"

"As little likely as I am myself, Isaac."

"No commander can say fairer nor that," said Isaac, with dignity. "Well, then, your honor, I'll tell ye the truth, and no lie: We was bound for Teneriffe with a fair wind, though not so much of it as we wanted, by reason she was a good sea-boat, but broad in the bows. The Peak hove in sight in the sky, and all the glasses was at her. She lay a point or two on our weather quarter, full two hours, and then she just melted away like a lump o' sugar. We kept on our course a day and a half, and, at last, we sighted the real Peak, and anchored off the port; whereby, when we saw Teneriffe Peak in the sky to winnard, she lay a hundred leagues to looard, s'help me God."

"That is wonderful," said General Rolleston.

"That will do, Isaac," said the captain. "Mr. Butt,

double his grog for a week, for having seen more than I have."

The captain and General Rolleston had a long discussion; but the result was, they determined to go to Easter Island first, for General Rolleston was a soldier, and had learned to obey as well as command. He saw no sufficient ground for deviating from Wardlaw's positive instructions.

This decision soon became known throughout the ship; and she was to weigh anchor at eleven A.M. next day, by high water.

At eight next morning, Captain Moreland and General Rolleston being on deck, one of the ship's boys, a regular pet, with rosy cheeks and black eyes, comes up to the gentlemen, takes off his cap, and, panting audibly at his own audacity, shoves a paper into General Rolleston's hand, and scuds away for his life.

"This won't do," said the captain, sternly.

The high-bred soldier handed the paper to him unopened.

The captain opened it, looked a little vexed, but more amused, and handed it back to the general.

It was a ROUND ROBIN.

Round Robins are not ingratiating as a rule. But this one came from some rough but honest fellows, who had already shown that kindliness and tact may reside in a coarse envelope. The sailors of the Springbok, when they first boarded her in the Thames, looked on themselves as men bound on an empty cruise: and nothing but the pay, which was five shillings per month above the average, reconciled them to it; for a sailor does not like going to sea for nothing, any more than a true sportsman likes to ride to hounds that are hunting a red herring trailed.

But the sight of the general had touched them afar

off. His gray hair and pale face, seen as he rowed out of Plymouth Harbor, had sent them to the yards by a gallant impulse; and all through the voyage the game had been to put on an air of alacrity and hope, whenever they passed the general or came under his eye.

THE "ROUND ROBIN."

If hypocrisy is always a crime, this was a very criminal ship; for the men, and even the boys, were hypocrites, who, feeling quite sure that the daughter was

dead at sea months ago, did, nevertheless, make up their faces to encourage the father into thinking she was alive, and he was going to find her. But people who pursue this game too long, and keep up the hopes of another, get infected at last themselves; and the crew of the Springbok arrived at Valparaiso infected with a little hope. Then came the Dutchman's tale, and the discussion, which ended adversely to their views; and this elicited the circular we have the honor to lay before our readers.

General Rolleston and Captain Moreland returned to the cabin and discussed this document. They came on deck again, and the men were piped aft. General Rolleston touched his cap, and with the Round Robin in his hand, addressed them thus: —

"My men, I thank you for taking my trouble to heart as you do. But it would be a bad return to send any of you to Easter Island in that cutter: for she is not seaworthy: so the captain tells me. I will not consent to throw away your lives in trying to save a life that is dear to me: but, as to the Dutchman's story, about an unknown island, our captain seems to think that is possible; and you tell us you are of the same opinion. Well, then, I give up my own judgment, and yield to yours. Yes, we will go westward with a good heart (he sighed), and a willing crew."

The men cheered. The boatswain piped; the anchor was heaved, and the Springbok went out on a course that bade fair to carry her within a hundred miles of Godsend Island.

She ran fast. On the second day, some ducks passed over her head, one of which was observed to have something attached to its leg.

She passed within sixty miles of Mount Lookout, but

never saw Godsend Island, and so pursued her way to the Society Islands; sent out her boats; made every inquiry around about the islands, but with no success; and, at last, after losing a couple of months there, brought the heart-sick father back on much the same course, but rather more northerly.

CHAPTER XLI.

Hazel returned homewards in a glow of triumph, and for once felt disposed to brag to Helen of his victory, — a victory by which she was to profit; not he.

They met in the wood; for she had tracked him by his footsteps. She seemed pale and disturbed, and speedily interrupted his exclamations of triumph, by one of delight, which was soon however followed by one of distress.

"Oh, look at you!" she said. "You have been in the water: it is wicked; wicked."

"But I have solved the problem. I caught three ducks one after another, and tied the intelligence to their legs: they are at this moment careering over the ocean, with our story and our longitude, and a guess at our latitude. Crown me with bays."

"With foolscap, more likely," said Helen: "only just getting well of rheumatic fever, and to go and stand in water up to the middle."

"Why, you don't listen to me," cried Hazel in amazement. "I tell you I have solved the problem."

"It is you that don't listen to common sense," retorted Helen. "If you go and make yourself ill, all the problems in the world will not compensate me. And I must say I think it was not very kind of you to run off so without warning: why give me hours of anxiety for want of a word? But there, it is useless to argue with a boy: yes, sir, a boy. The fact is, I have been too easy with you of late. One indulges sick children. But then they must not slip away and stand in the water, or

there is an end of indulgence; and one is driven to severity. You must be ruled with a rod of iron. Go home this moment, sir, and change your clothes; and don't you presume to come into the presence of the nurse you have offended, till there's not a wet thread about you."

And so she ordered him off. The inventor in his moment of victory slunk away crestfallen to change his clothes.

So far Helen Rolleston was a type of her sex in its treatment of inventors. At breakfast she became a brilliant exception. The moment she saw Hazel seated by her fire in dry clothes she changed her key, and made him relate the whole business, and expressed the warmest admiration and sympathy.

"But," said she, "I do ask you not to repeat this exploit too often; now, don't do it again for a fortnight. The island will not run away. Ducks come and go every day, and your health is very, very precious."

He colored with pleasure, and made the promise at once. But during this fortnight events occurred. In the first place, he improved his invention. He remembered how a duck, over-weighted by a crab which was fast to her leg, had come on board the boat. Memory dwelling on this and invention digesting it, he resolved to weight his next batch of ducks; for he argued thus: "Probably our ducks go straight from this to the great American Continent. Then it may be long ere one of them falls into the hands of a man; and perhaps that man will not know English. But, if I could impede the flight of my ducks, they might alight on ships: and three ships out of four know English."

Accordingly, he now inserted stones of various sizes into the little bags. It was a matter of nice calculation; the problem was to weight the birds just so much that

they might be able to fly three or four hundred miles, or about half as far as their unencumbered companions.

But in the midst of all this, a circumstance occurred that would have made a vain man, or indeed most men, fling the whole thing away. Helen and he came to a rupture. It began by her fault, and continued by his. She did not choose to know her own mind, and in spite of secret warnings from her better judgment, she was driven by curiosity or by the unhappy restlessness to which her sex are peculiarly subject at odd times, to sound Hazel as to the meaning of a certain epigram that rankled in her. And she did it in the most feminine way, that is to say, in the least direct: whereas the safest way would have been to grasp the nettle, if she could not let it alone.

Said she one day, quietly, though with a deep blush, "Do you know Mr. Arthur Wardlaw?"

Hazel gave a shiver, and said, "I do."

"Do you know anything about him?"

"I do."

"Nothing to his discredit, I am sure."

"If you are sure, why ask me? Do I ever mention his name?"

"Perhaps you do, sometimes, without intending it."

"You are mistaken; he is in your thoughts, no doubt, but not in mine."

"Ought I to forget people entirely, and what I owe them?"

"That is a question I decline to go into."

"How harshly you speak to me! Is that fair? You know my engagement, and that honor and duty draw me to England; yet I am happy here. You, who are so good and strong, might pity me at least; for I am torn this way and that;" and here the voice ceased, and the tears began to flow.

"I do pity you," said Hazel; "I must pity any one who is obliged to mention honor and duty in the same breath as Arthur Wardlaw."

At this time Helen drew back, offended bitterly. "*That* pity I reject and scorn," said she. "No, I plighted my faith with my eyes open, and to a worthy object. I never knew him blacken any person who was not there to speak for himself, and that is a very worthy trait, in my opinion. The absent are like children; they are helpless to defend themselves."

Hazel, racked with jealousy, and irritated at this galling comparison, lost his temper for once, and said those who lay traps must not complain if others fall into them.

"Traps! Who lays them?"

"You did, Miss Rolleston. Did I ever condescend to mention that man's name since we have been on the island? It is you make me talk of him."

"Condescend?"

"That is the word. Nor will I ever deign to mention him again. If my love had touched your heart, I should have been obliged to mention him, for then I should have been bound to tell you a story in which he is mixed, my own miserable story — my blood boils against the human race when I think of it. But no, I see I am nothing to you; and I will be silent."

"It is very cruel of you to say that," replied Helen, with tears in her eyes; "tell me your story, and you will see whether you are nothing to me."

"Not one word of it," said Hazel, slowly, "until you have forgotten that that man exists."

"Oh! thank you, sir, this is plain speaking. I am to forget honor and plighted faith; and then you will trust me with your secrets, when I have shown myself unworthy to be trusted with anything. Keep your secrets,

and I'll try and keep faith; ay, and I shall keep it, too, as long as there's life in my body."

"Can't you keep faith without torturing me, who love you?"

Helen's bosom began to heave at this, but she fought bravely. "Love me less, and respect me more," said she, panting; "you affront me, you frighten me. I looked on you as a brother, a dear brother. But now I am afraid of you — I am afraid —"

He was so injudicious as to interrupt her. "You have nothing to fear," said he; "keep this side of the island, and I'll live on the other, rather than hear the name of Arthur Wardlaw."

Helen's courage failed her at that spirited proposal, and she made no reply at all, but turned her back haughtily, and went away from him; only when she had got a little way her proud head drooped, and she went crying.

A coolness sprang up between them, and neither of them knew how to end it. Hazel saw no way to serve her now, except by flying weighted ducks; and he gave his mind so to this, that one day he told her he had twenty-seven ducks in the air, all charged, and two-thirds of them weighted. He thought that must please her now. To his surprise and annoyance, she received the intelligence coldly, and asked him whether it was not cruel to the birds.

Hazel colored with mortification at his great act of self-denial being so received.

He said, "I don't think my worst enemy can say I am wantonly cruel to God's creatures."

Helen threw in, deftly, "And I am not your worst enemy."

"But what other way is there to liberate you from this island, where you have nobody to speak to but me?

Well, selfishness is the best course. Think only of others, and you are sure not to please them."

"If you want to please people, you must begin by understanding them," said the lady, not ill-naturedly.

"But if they don't understand themselves?"

"Then pity them; you can, for you are a man."

"What hurts me," said Hazel, "is that you really seem to think I fly these ducks for my pleasure. Why, if I had my wish, you and I should never leave this island, nor any other person set a foot on it. I am frank, you see."

"Rather too frank."

"What does it matter, since I do my duty all the same, and fly the ducks? But sometimes I do yearn for a word of praise for it, and that word never comes."

"It is a praiseworthy act," said Helen, but so icily that it is a wonder he ever flew another duck after that.

"No matter," said he, and his hand involuntarily sought his heart; "you read me a sharp but wholesome lesson, that we should do our duty for our duty's sake. And as I am quite sure it is my duty to liberate you and restore you to those you — I'll fly three ducks to-morrow morning instead of two."

"It is not done by my advice," said Helen. "You will certainly make yourself ill."

"Oh, that is all nonsense," said Hazel.

"You are rude to me," said Helen, "and I don't deserve it."

"Rude, am I? Then I'll say no more," said Hazel, half-humbly, half-doggedly.

His parchment was exhausted, and he was driven to another expedient. He obtained alcohol by distillation from rum, and having found dragon's-blood in its pure state, little ruby drops, made a deep red varnish that

defied water; he got slips of bark, white inside, cut his inscription deep on the inner side, and filled the incised letters with this red varnish. He had forty-eight ducks in the air, and was rising before daybreak to catch another couple, when he was seized with a pain in the right hip and knee, and found he could hardly walk, so he gave in that morning, and kept about the premises. But he got worse, and he had hardly any use in his right side, from the waist downwards, and was in great pain.

As the day wore on, the pain and loss of power increased, and resisted all his remedies; there was no fever to speak of, but Nature was grimly revenging herself for many a gentler warning neglected. When he realized his condition, he was terribly cut up, and sat on the sand with his head in his hands for nearly two hours. But, after that period of despondency, he got up, took his boat-hook, and using it as a staff, hobbled to his arsenal, and set to work.

Amongst his materials was a young tree he had pulled up: the roots ran at right angles to the stem. He just sawed off the ends of the roots, and then proceeded to shorten the stem.

But meantime, Helen, who had always a secret eye on him and his movements, had seen there was something wrong, and came timidly and asked what was the matter.

"Nothing," said he, doggedly.

"Then why did you sit so long on the sand? I never saw you like that."

"I was ruminating."

"What upon? Not that I have any right to ask."

"On the arrogance and folly of men; they attempt more than they can do, and despise the petty prudence and common sense of women, and smart for it; as I am smarting now for being wiser than you."

"Oh!" said Helen; "why, what is the matter? and what is that you have made? It looks like — oh, dear!"

"It is a crutch," said Hazel, with forced calmness; "and I am a cripple."

Helen clasped her hands and stood trembling.

Hazel lost his self-control for a moment, and cried out in a voice of agony, "A useless cripple. I wish I was dead and out of the way."

Then, ashamed of having given way before *her*, he seized his crutch, placed the crook under his arm, and turned sullenly away from her.

Four steps he took with his crutch.

She caught him with two movements of her supple and vigorous frame.

She just laid her left hand gently on his shoulder, and with her right she stole the crutch softly away, and let it fall upon the sand. She took his right hand, and put it to her lips like a subject paying homage to her sovereign; and then she put her strong arm under his shoulder, still holding his right hand in hers, and looked in his face. "No wooden crutches when I am by," said she in a low voice, full of devotion.

He stood surprised, and his eyes began to fill.

"Come," said she, in a voice of music. And, thus aided, he went with her to her cavern. As they went, she asked him tenderly where the pain was.

"It *was* in my hip and knee," he said: "but now it is nowhere; for joy has come back to my heart."

"And to mine too," said Helen; "except for this."

The quarrel dispersed like a cloud, under this calamity. There was no formal reconciliation; no discussion: and this was the wisest course: for the unhappy situation remained unchanged; and the friendliest discussion

could only fan the embers of discord and misery gently, instead of fiercely.

The pair so strangely thrown together commenced a new chapter of their existence. It was not patient and nurse over again; Hazel, though very lame, had too much spirit left to accept that position. But still the sexes became in a measure reversed — Helen the fisherman and forager, Hazel the cook and domestic.

He was as busy as ever, but in a narrow circle; he found pearl oysters near the sunk galleon, and ere he had been lame many weeks, he had entirely lined the sides of the cavern with mother-of-pearl set in cement, and close as mosaic.

Every day he passed an hour in paradise; for his living crutch made him take a little walk with her; her hand held his; her arm supported his shoulder; her sweet face was near his, full of tender solicitude: they seemed to be one; and spoke in whispers to each other, like thinking aloud. The causes of happiness were ever present: the causes of unhappiness were out of sight, and showed no signs of approach.

And of the two, Helen was the happiest. Before a creature so pure as this marries and has children, the great maternal instinct is still there, but feeds on what it can get — first a doll, and then some helpless creature or other. Too often she wastes her heart's milk on something grown up, but as selfish as a child. Helen was more fortunate; her child was her hero, now so lame that he must lean on her to walk. The days passed by, and the island was fast becoming the world to those two, and as bright a world as ever shone on two mortal creatures.

It was a happy dream.

What a pity that dreams dissolve so soon! This had

lasted for nearly two months, and Hazel was getting better, though still not well enough, or not fool enough, to dismiss his live crutch, when one afternoon Helen, who had been up on the heights, observed a dark cloud in the blue sky towards the west. There was not another cloud visible, and the air marvellously clear; time, about three-quarters of an hour before sunset. She told Hazel about this solitary cloud, and asked him, with some anxiety, if it portended another storm. He told her to be under no alarm — there were no tempests in that latitude except at the coming in and going out of the rains, — but he should like to go round the point and look at her cloud.

She leant him her arm, and they went round the point; and there they saw a cloud entirely different from anything they had ever seen since they were on the island. It was like an enormous dark ribbon stretched along the sky, at some little height above the horizon. Notwithstanding its prodigious length it got larger before their very eyes.

Hazel started.

Helen felt him start, and asked him, with some surprise, what was the matter.

"Cloud!" said he, "that is no cloud. That is smoke."

"Smoke!" echoed Helen, becoming agitated in her turn.

"Yes; the breeze is northerly, and carries the smoke nearer to us; it is the smoke of a steamboat."

CHAPTER XLII.

Both were greatly moved; and after one swift glance Helen stole at him, neither looked at the other. They spoke in flurried whispers.

"Can they see the island?"

"I don't know; it depends on how far the boat is to windward of her smoke."

"How shall we know?"

"If she sees the island, she will make for it that moment."

"Why? do ships never pass an unknown island?"

"Yes. But that steamer will not pass us."

"But why?"

At this question Hazel hung his head and his lip quivered. He answered her at last. "Because she is looking for *you*."

Helen was struck dumb at this.

He gave his reasons. "Steamers never visit these waters. Love has brought that steamer out; love that will not go unrewarded. Arthur Wardlaw is on board that ship."

"Have they seen us yet?"

Hazel forced on a kind of dogged fortitude. He said, "When the smoke ceases to elongate, you will know they have changed their course, and they will change their course the moment the man at the mast-head sees us."

"Oh! But how do you know they have a man at the mast-head?"

"I know by myself. I should have a man at the mast-head night and day."

And now the situation was beyond words. They both watched, and watched, to see the line of smoke cease.

It continued to increase, and spread eastward; and that proved the steamer was continuing her course.

The sun drew close to the horizon.

"They don't see us," said Helen, faintly.

"No," said Hazel; "not yet."

"And the sun is just setting. It is all over."

She put her handkerchief to her eyes a moment, and then, after a sob or two, she said almost cheerfully, "Well, dear friend, we were happy till that smoke came to disturb us: let us try and be as happy now it is gone. Don't smile like that, it makes me shudder."

"Did I smile? It must have been at your simplicity in thinking we have seen the last of that steamer."

"And so we have."

"Not so. In three hours she will be at anchor in that bay."

"Why, what will bring her?"

"I shall bring her."

"You? How?"

"By lighting my bonfire."

CHAPTER XLIII.

Helen had forgotten all about the bonfire. She now asked whether he was sure those on board the steamer could see the bonfire. Then Hazel told her that it was now of prodigious size and height. Some six months before he was crippled he had added and added to it.

"That bonfire," said he, "will throw a ruddy glare over the heavens, that they can't help seeing on board the steamer. Then, as they are not on a course, but on a search, they will certainly run a few miles southward to see what it is. They will say it is a beacon or a ship on fire; and, in either case, they will turn the boat's head this way. Well, before they have run southward half a dozen miles, their look-out will see the bonfire, and the island in its light. Let us get to the boat, my lucifers are there."

She lent him her arm to the boat, and stood by while he made his preparations. They were very simple. He took a pine torch and smeared it all over with pitch; then put his lucifer-box in his bosom, and took his crutch. His face was drawn pitiably, but his closed lips betrayed unshaken and unshakable resolution. He shouldered his crutch, and hobbled up as far as the cavern. Here Helen interposed.

"Don't you go toiling up the hill," said she. "Give me the lucifers and the torch, and let me light the beacon. I shall be there in half the time you will."

"Thank you! thank you!" said Hazel, eagerly, not to say violently.

He wanted it done; but it killed him to do it. He then gave her his instructions.

"It is as big as a haystack," said he, "and as dry as a chip; and there are eight bundles of straw placed expressly. Light the bundles to windward first, then the others; it will soon be all in a blaze."

"Meanwhile," said Helen, "you prepare our supper. I feel quite faint — for want of it."

Hazel assented.

"It is the last we shall — " he was going to say it was the last they would eat together; but his voice failed him, and he hobbled into the cavern, and tried to smother his emotion in work. He lighted the fire, and blew it into a flame with a palmetto-leaf, and then he sat down a while, very sick at heart; then he got up and did the cooking, sighing all the time; and, just when he was beginning to wonder why Helen was so long lighting eight bundles of straw, she came in, looking pale.

"Is it all right?" said he.

"Go and look," said she. "No, let us have our supper first."

Neither had any appetite: they sat and kept casting strange looks at one another.

To divert this anyhow Hazel looked up at the roof, and said faintly, "If I had known, I would have made more haste, and set pearl *there* as well."

"What does that matter?" said Helen, looking down.

"Not much, indeed," replied he, sadly. "I am a fool to utter such childish regrets; and, more than that, I am a mean selfish cur to *have* a regret. Come, come, we can't eat; let us go round the point and see the waves reddened by the beacon, that gives you back to the world you were born to embellish."

Helen said she would go directly. And her languid reply contrasted strangely with his excitement. She

played with her supper, and he could wait no longer, he must go and see how the beacon was burning.

"Oh, very well," said she; and they went down to the beach.

She took his crutch and gave it to him. This little thing cut him to the heart. It was the first time she had accompanied him so far as that without offering herself to be his crutch. He sighed deeply, as he put the crutch under his arm; but he was too proud to complain, only he laid it all on the approaching steamboat.

The subtle creature by his side heard the sigh, and smiled sadly at being misunderstood — but what man could understand her? They hardly spoke till they reached the point. The waves glittered in the moonlight: there was no red light on the water.

"Why, what is this?" said Hazel. "You can't have lighted the bonfire in eight places, as I told you."

She folded her arms and stood before him in an attitude of defiance: all but her melting eye.

"I have not lighted at it all," said she.

Hazel stood aghast. "What have I done?" he cried. "Duty, manhood, everything, demanded that I should light that beacon, and I trusted it to you."

Helen's attitude of defiance melted away: she began to cower, and hid her blushing face in her hands. Then she looked up imploringly. Then she uttered a wild and eloquent cry, and fled from him like the wind.

CHAPTER XLIV.

That cloud was really the smoke of the Springbok, which had mounted into air so thin that it could rise no higher. The boat herself was many miles to the northward, returning full of heavy hearts from a fruitless search. She came back in a higher parallel of latitude, intending afterwards to steer N.W. to Easter Island. The life was gone out of the ship; the father was deeply dejected, and the crew could no longer feign the hope they did not feel. Having pursued the above course to within four hundred miles of Juan Fernandez, General Rolleston begged the captain to make a bold deviation to the S.W., and then see if they could find nothing there before going to Easter Island.

Captain Moreland was very unwilling to go to the S.W., the more so as coal was getting short. However, he had not the heart to refuse General Rolleston anything. There was a northerly breeze; he had the fires put out, and, covering the ship with canvas, sailed three hundred miles S.W. But found nothing. Then he took in sail, got up steam again, and away for Easter Island. The ship ran so fast that she had got into latitude 32° by 10 A.M. next morning.

At 10h. 15m. the dreary monotony of this cruise was broken by the man at the mast-head.

"On deck there!"

"Hullo!"

"The schooner on our weather-bow!"

"Well, what of her?"

"She has luffed."

"Well, what o' that?"

"She has altered her course."

"How many points?"

"She was sailing S.E., and now her head is N.E.

"That is curious."

General Rolleston, who had come and listened with a grain of hope, now sighed and turned away.

The captain explained kindly that the man was quite right to draw his captain's attention to the fact of a trading vessel altering her course. "There is a sea-grammar, general," said he; "and when one seaman sees another violate it, he concludes there is some reason or other. Now, Jack, what d'ye make of her?"

"I can't make much of her: she don't seem to know her own mind, that is all. At ten o'clock she was bound for Valparaiso or the island. But now she has come about and beating to windward."

"Bound for Easter Island?"

"I dunno."

"Keep your eye on her."

"Ay, ay, sir."

Captain Moreland told General Rolleston that very few ships went to Easter Island, which lies in a lovely climate, but is a miserable place; and he was telling the general that it is inhabited by savages of a low order, who half worship the relics of masonry left by their more civilized predecessors, when Jack hailed the deck again.

"Well," said the captain.

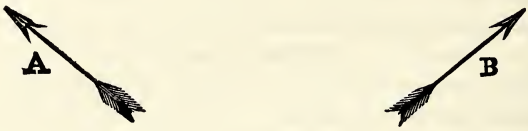
"I think she is bound for the Springbok."

The soldier received this conjecture with astonishment and incredulity, not to be wondered at.

The steamboat headed N.W. right in the wind's eye.

Sixteen miles off at least a ship was sailing N.E. So that the two courses might be represented with tolerable

accuracy by the following diagram, in which A represents the course of the steamer, and B that of the schooner. And there hung in the air, like a black mark against the blue sky, a fellow, whose oracular voice came down and said B was endeavoring to intercept A.



Nevertheless time confirmed the conjecture; the schooner, having made a short board to the N.E., came about and made a long board due west, which was as near as she could lie to the wind. On this Captain Moreland laid the steamboat's head due north. This brought the vessels rapidly together.

When they were about two miles distant, the stranger slackened sail and hove-to; hoisting stars and stripes at her mizzen. The union jack went up the shrouds of the Springbok directly, and she pursued her course, but gradually slackened her steam.

General Rolleston walked the deck in great agitation, and now indulged in wild hopes, which Captain Moreland thought it best to discourage at once.

"Ah, sir," he said; "don't you run into the other extreme, and imagine he has come on our business. It is at sea as it is ashore: if a man goes out of his course to speak to you, it is for his own sake, not yours. This Yankee has got men sick with scurvy, and is come for lime juice. Or his water is out. Or — hallo, savages aboard."

It was too true. The schooner had a cargo of savages male and female; the males were nearly naked, but the

females, strange to say, were dressed to the throat in ample robes with broad and flowing skirts, and had little coronets on their heads. As soon as the schooner hove-to, the fiddle had struck up, and the savages were now dancing in parties of four; the men doing a sort of monkey hornpipe in quick pace with their hands nearly touching the ground: the women, on the contrary, erect and queenly, swept about in slow rhythm, with most graceful and coquettish movements of the arms and hands, and bewitching smiles.

The steamboat came alongside, but at a certain distance, to avoid all chance of collision; and the crew clustered at the side and cheered the savages dancing. The poor general was forgotten at the merry sight.

Presently a negro in white cotton, with a face blacker than the savages, stepped forward and hoisted a board, on which was printed very large: ARE YOU

Having allowed this a moment to sink into the mind, he reversed the board, and showed these words, also printed large: THE SPRINGBOK?

There was a thrilling murmur on board; and after a pause of surprise, the question was answered by a loud cheer and waving of hats.

The reply was perfectly understood; almost immediately a boat was lowered by some novel machinery, and pulled towards the steamer. There were two men in it: the skipper and the negro. The skipper came up the side of the Springbok. He was loosely dressed in some light drab-colored stuff and a huge straw hat; a man with a long Puritanical head, a nose inclined to be aquiline, a face bronzed by weather and heat, thin resolute lips, and a square chin. But for a certain breadth between his keen gray eyes, which revealed more intellect than Cromwell's Ironsides were encumbered with, he

might have passed for one of that hard-praying, harder-hitting fraternity.

He came on deck, just touched his hat, as if to brush away a fly, and, removing an enormous cigar from his mouth, said, "Wal, and so this is the Springbok. Spry little boat she is: how many knots can ye get out of her now? Not that I am curious."

"About twelve knots."

"And when the steam's off the bile how many can you sail? Not that it is my business."

"Eight or nine. What *is* your business?"

"Hum! You have been over *some* water looking for that gal. Where do ye hail from last?"

"The Society Islands. Did you board me to hear me my catechism?"

"No, I am not one of your prying sort. Where are ye bound for now?"

"I am bound for Easter Island."

"Have you heard anything of the gal?"

"No."

"And when do ye expect to go back to England as wise as ye came?"

"Never while the ship can swim," cried Moreland, angrily, to hide his despondency from this stranger. "And now it is my turn, I think. What schooner is this? by whom commanded, and whither bound?"

"The Julia Dodd; Joshua Fullalove; bound for Juan Fernandez with the raw material of civilization — look at the varmint skippin' — and a printing press; an' that's the instrument of civilization, I rather think."

"Well, sir; and why in heaven's name did you change your course?"

"Wal, I reckon I changed it — to tell you a lie."

"To tell us a lie?"

"Ay; the darndest etarnal lie that ever came out of a

man's mouth. Fust, there's an unknown island somewheres about. That's a kinder flourish beforehand. On that island there's an English gal wrecked."

Exclamations burst forth on every side at this.

"And she's so tarnation cute, she's flying ducks all over creation with a writing tied to their legs, telling the tale, and setting down the longitude. There, if that isn't a buster, I hope I may never live to tell another."

"God bless you, sir!" cried the general. "Where is the island?"

"What island?"

"The island where my child is wrecked."

"What, are you the gal's father?" said Joshua, with a sudden touch of feeling.

"I am, sir. Pray withhold nothing from me you know."

"Why, cunnle," said the Yankee, soothingly; "don't I tell you it's a buster? However, the lie is none o' mine. It's that old cuss Skinflint set it afloat; he is always pisoning these peaceful waters."

Rolleston asked eagerly who Skinflint was, and where he could be found.

"Wal, he's a sorter sea Jack-of-all-trades, etarnally cruising about to buy gratis,—those he buys of call it stealing. Got a rotten old cutter, manned by his wife and fam'ly. They get coal out of me for fur, and sell the coal at double my price; they kill seals and dress the skins aboard; kill fish and salt 'em aboard. Ye know when that fam'ly is at sea by the smell that pervades the briny deep an' heralds their approach. Yesterday the air smelt awful: so I said to Vespasian here, I think that sea-skunk is out, for there's something a-pisoning the cerulean waves an' succumambient air. We hadn't sailed not fifty miles more before we run agin him. *Their clothes were drying all about the rigging.* Hails

me, the varmint does. Vesp and I, we work the printing-press together, an' so order him to looward, not to taint our Otaheitans, that stink of ile at home, but I had 'em biled before I'd buy em, an' now they're vilets. 'Wal, now, Skinflint,' says I; 'I reckon you're come to bring me that harpoon o' mine you stole last time you was at my island?' 'I never saw your harpoon,' says he; 'I want to know, have you come across the Springbok?' 'Mebbe I have,' says I; 'why do you ask?' 'Got news for her,' says he; 'and can't find her nowheres.' So then we set to and fenced a bit; and this old varmint, to put me off the truth, told me the buster. A month ago or more he was boarded — by a duck. And this 'ere duck had a writing tied to his leg, and this 'ere writing said an English gal was wrecked on an island, and put down the very longitude. 'Show me that duck,' ses I, ironical. 'D'ye take us for fools?' ses he; 'we ate the duck for supper.' 'That was like ye,' says I; 'if an angel brought your pardon down from heights celestial, you'd roast him and sell his feathers for swan's-down; mebbe you ate the writing? I know you're a hungry lot.' 'The writing is in my cabin,' says he. 'Show it me,' says I, 'an mebbe I'll believe ye.' No, the cuss would only show it to the Springbok; 'there's a reward,' says he. 'What's the price of a soul aboard your cutter?' I asked him. 'Have you parted with yours as you wants to buy one?' says he. 'Not one as would carry me right slick away to everlasting blazes,' says I. So then we said good morning, and he bore away for Valparaiso. Presently I saw your smoke, and that you would never overhaul old Stinkamalee on that track: so I came about. Now I tell *you* that old cuss knows where the gal is, and mebbe has got her tied hand and fut in his cabin. An' I'm kinder sot on English gals: they put me in mind of butter and honey. Why, my

schooner is named after one. So, now, cunnle, clap on steam for Valparaiso, and you'll soon overhaul the old stink-pot; you may know him by the brown patch in his jib-sail, the ontidy varmint. Pull out your purse and bind him to drop lying about ducks and geese, and tell you the truth; he knows where your gal is, I swan. Wal, ye needn't smother me." For by this time he was the centre of a throng, all pushing and driving to catch his words.

Captain Moreland begged him to step down into his cabin, and there the general thanked him with great warmth and agitation for his humanity. "We will follow your advice at once," he said. "Is there anything I can offer you, without offence?"

"Wal," drawled the Yankee, "I guess not. Business and sentiment won't mix nohow. Business took me to the island, sentiment brought me here. I'll take a shake-hand all round; and if y'have got live fowls to spare I'll be obliged to you for a couple. Ye see I'm colonizing that darned island: an' sowing it with grain, an' apples, an' Otaheitans, an' niggers, an' Irishmen, an' all the other cream o' creation; an' I'd be glad of a couple o' Dorkins to crow the lazy varmint up."

This very moderate request was very readily complied with, and the acclamations and cheers of the crew followed this strange character to his schooner, at which his eye glistened and twinkled with quiet satisfaction, but he made it a point of honor not to move a muscle.

Before he could get under way the Springbok took a circuit, and passing within a hundred yards of him, fired a gun to leeward by way of compliment, set a cloud of canvas, and tore through the water at her highest speed. Outside the port of Valparaiso she fell in with Skinflint, and found him not quite so black as he was painted. The old fellow showed some parental feeling, produced

the bag at once to General Rolleston, and assured him a wearied duck had come on board, and his wife had detached the writing.

They took in coal, and then ran westward once more, every heart beating high with confident hope.

CHAPTER XLV.

Helen's act was strange, and demands a word of explanation. If she had thought the steamboat was a strange vessel, she would have lighted the bonfire: if she had known her father was on board, she would have lighted it with joy. But Hazel, whose every word now was gospel, had said it was Arthur Wardlaw in that boat, seaching for her.

Still, so strong is the impulse in all civilized beings to get back to civilization, that she went up that hill as honestly intending to light the bonfire, as Hazel intended it should be lighted. But as she went her courage cooled, and her feet began to go slowly, as her mind ran swiftly forward to consequence upon consequence. To light that bonfire was to bring Arthur Wardlaw down upon herself and Hazel living alone and on intimate terms. Arthur would come and claim her to his face. Could she disallow his claim? Gratitude would now be on his side as well as good faith. What a shock to Arthur! What torture for Hazel! torture that he foresaw, or why the face of anguish, that dragged even now at her heart-strings? And then it could end only in one way; she and Hazel would leave the island in Arthur's ship. What a voyage for all three! She stood transfixed by shame, her whole body blushed at what she saw coming. Then once more Hazel's face rose before her; poor crippled Hazel! her hero and her patient. She sat down and sighed, and could no more light the fire, than she could have put it out if another had lighted it.

She was a girl that could show you at times she had a

father as well as a mother; but that evening she was all woman.

They met no more that night.

In the morning his face was haggard, and showed a mental struggle; but hers was placid and quietly beaming, for the very reason that she had made a great sacrifice. She was one of that sort.

And this difference between them was a foretaste.

His tender conscience pricked him sore. To see her sit beaming there, when, if he had done his own duty with his own hands, she would be on her way to England! Yet his remorse was dumb; for, if he gave it vent, then he must seem ungrateful to her for *her* sacrifice.

She saw his deep and silent compunction, approved it secretly, said nothing, but smiled, and beamed, and soothed. He could not resist this; and wild thrills of joy and hope passed through him, visions of unbroken bliss far from the world.

But this sweet delirium was followed by misgivings of another kind. And here she was at fault. What could they be?

It was the voice of conscience telling him that he was really winning her love once inaccessible; and, if so, was bound to tell her his whole story, and let her judge between him and the world, before she made any more sacrifices for him. But it is hard to stop great happiness: harder to stop it and ruin it. Every night as he lay alone he said, "To-morrow I will tell her all, and make her the judge." But in the morning her bright face crushed his purpose by the fear of clouding it. His limbs got strong and his heart got weak; and they used to take walks; and her head came near his shoulder; and the path of duty began to be set thicker than ever with thorns, and the path of love with primroses. One day she made him sit to her for his portrait; and, under

cover of artistic enthusiasm, told him his beard was god-like, and nothing in the world could equal it for beauty; she never saw but one at all like it, poor Mr. Seaton's; but even that was very inferior to his: and then she dismissed the sitter. "Poor thing," said she, "you are pale and tired." And she began to use ornaments, took her bracelets out of her bag, and picked pearls out of her walls, and made a coronet, under which her eyes flashed at night with superlative beauty, conscious beauty admired and looked at by the eye she desired to please.

She revered him. He had improved her character, and she knew it, and often told him so. "Call me Hazelie," she said; "make me liker you, still."

One day he came suddenly through the jungle and found her reading her prayer-book.

He took it from her, not meaning to be rude neither, but inquisitive.

It was open at the marriage-service, and her cheeks were dyed scarlet.

His heart panted. He was a clergyman: he could read that service over them both.

Would it be a marriage?

Not in England; but in some countries it would. Why not in this? This was not England.

He looked up. Her head was averted; she was downright distressed.

He was sorry to have made her blush; so he took her hand and kissed it tenderly, so tenderly, that his heart seemed to go into his lips. She thrilled under it, and her white brow sank upon his shoulder.

The sky was a vault of purple with a flaming topaz in the centre; the sea, a heavenly blue; the warm air breathed heavenly odors; flaming macaws wheeled overhead; humming-birds, more gorgeous than any flower, buzzed round their heads, and amazed the eye with delight, then cooled

it with the deep green of the jungle into which they dived.

It was a Paradise, with the sun smiling down on it, and the ocean smiling up, and the air impregnated with love. Here they were both content now to spend the rest of their days —

"The world forgetting; by the world forgot."

CHAPTER XLVI.

The Springbok arrived in due course at longitude 103° 30′, but saw no island. This was dispiriting; but still Captain Moreland did not despair.

He asked General Rolleston to examine the writing carefully, and tell him was that Miss Rolleston's handwriting.

The general shook his head sorrowfully.

"No," said he; "it is nothing like my child's hand."

"Why, all the better," said Captain Moreland; "the lady has got somebody about her who knows a thing or two. The man that could catch wild ducks and turn 'em into postmen, could hit on the longitude somehow; and he doesn't pretend to be exact in the latitude."

Upon this he ran northward four hundred miles; which took him three days; for they stopped at night.

No island.

He then ran south five hundred miles; stopping at night.

No island.

Then he took the vessel zigzag.

Just before sunset, one lovely day, the man at the mast-head sang out:

"On deck there!"

"Hullo!"

"Something in-sight; on our weather-bow."

"What is it?"

"Looks like a mast. No. Don't know what it is."

"Point."

The sailor pointed with his finger.

Captain Moreland ordered the ship's course to be altered accordingly. By this time, General Rolleston was on deck. The ship ran two miles on the new course; and all this time the topman's glass was levelled, and the crew climbed about the rigging, all eyes and ears.

At last the clear hail came down.

"I can make it out now, sir."

"What is it?"

"It is a palm-tree."

The captain jumped on a gun, and waved his hat grandly, and instantly the vessel rang with a lusty cheer; and, for once, sailors gabbled like washerwomen.

They ran till they saw the island in the moonlight, and the giant palm, black, and sculptured out of the violet sky; then they set the lead going, and it warned them not to come too close. They anchored off the west coast.

At daybreak, they moved slowly on, still sounding as they went; and, rounding the west point, General Rolleston saw written on the guanoed rocks in large letters: —

AN ENGLISH LADY WRECKED HERE.
HASTE TO HER RESCUE.

He and Moreland shook hands; and how their eyes glistened!

Presently there was a stranger inscription still upon the rocks — a rough outline of the island on an enormous scale, showing the coast-line, the reefs, the shallow water, and the deep water.

"Ease her! Stop her!"

The captain studied this original chart with his glass, and crept slowly on for the west passage.

But warned by the soundings marked on the rock, he did not attempt to go through the passage, but came to an anchor and lowered his boat.

The sailors were all on the *qui vive* to land; but the captain, to their infinite surprise, told them only three persons would land that morning — himself, his son, and General Rolleston.

The fact is, this honest captain had got a misgiving, founded on a general view of human nature. He expected to find the girl with two or three sailors, one of them united to her by some nautical ceremony, duly witnessed, but such as a *military* officer of distinction could hardly be expected to approve. He got into the boat in a curious state of delight, dashed with uncomfortable suspense; and they rowed gently for the west passage.

As for General Rolleston, now it was he needed all his fortitude. Suppose the lady was not Helen! After all, the chances were against her being there. Suppose she was dead and buried in that island! Suppose that fatal disease, with which she had sailed, had been accelerated by hardships, and Providence permitted him only to receive her last sigh. All these misgivings crowded on him the moment he drew so near the object, which had looked all brightness, so long as it was unattainable. He sat, pale and brave, in the boat; but his doubts and fears were greater than his hope.

They rounded Telegraph Point, and in a moment Paradise Bay burst upon them, and Hazel's boat within a hundred yards of them. It was half tide. They beached the boat, and General Rolleston landed. Captain Moreland grasped his hand, and said, "Call us if it is all right."

General Rolleston returned the pressure of that honest hand, and marched up the beach just as if he were going into action.

He came to the boat. It had an awning over the stern, and was clearly used as a sleeping-place. A series of wooden pipes standing on uprights, led from this up to the cliff. The pipes were in fact mere sections of the sago tree with the soft pith driven out. As this was manifestly a tube of communication, General Rolleston followed it until he came to a sort of veranda with a cave opening on it; he entered the cave, and was dazzled by its most unexpected beauty. He seemed to be in a gigantic nautilus. Roof and sides, and the very chimney, were one blaze of mother-of-pearl. But, after the first start, brighter to him was an old shawl he saw on a nail; for that showed it was a woman's abode. He tore down the old shawl and carried it to the light. He recognized it as Helen's. Her rugs were in a corner; he rushed in and felt them all over with trembling hands. They were still warm, though she had left her bed some time. He came out wild with joy, and shouted to Moreland, "She is alive! She is alive! She is alive!" Then fell on his knees and thanked God.

A cry came down to him from above; he looked up as he knelt, and there was a female figure dressed in white, stretching out its hands as if it would fly down to him. Its eyes gleamed; he knew them all that way off. He stretched out his hands as eloquently, and then he got up to meet her; but the stout soldier's limbs were stiffer than of old; and he got up so slowly, that, ere he could take a step, there came flying to him with little screams and inarticulate cries, no living skeleton, nor consumptive young lady, but a grand creature, tanned here and there, rosy as the morn, and full of lusty vigor; a body all health, strength, and beauty, a soul all love. She flung herself all over him in a moment, with cries of love unspeakable; and then it was, "Oh, my darling! my darling! Oh, my own, own! Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Oh! oh! oh! oh! Is it you? is it? can it! Papa! papa!" then little convulsive hands patting him and feeling his beard and shoulders; then a sudden hail of violent kisses on his head, his eyes, his arms, his hands, his knees. Then a stout soldier, broken down by this, and sobbing for joy. "Oh, my child! My flesh and blood! Oh! oh! oh!" Then all manhood melted away, except paternity; and a father turned mother, and clinging, kissing, and rocking to and fro with his child, and both crying for joy as if their hearts would burst.

A sight for angels to look down at and rejoice.

But what mortal pen could paint it?

CHAPTER XLVII.

They gave a long time to pure joy before either of them cared to put questions or compare notes. But at last he asked her, "Who was on the island beside her?"

"Oh," said she, "only my guardian angel. Poor Mr. Welch died the first week we were here."

He parted the hair on her brow and kissed it tenderly.

"And who is your guardian angel?"

"Why, you are now my own papa: and well you have proved it. To think of your being the one to come at your age!"

"Well, never mind me. Who has taken such care of my child? — this the sick girl they frightened me about!"

"Indeed, papa, I *was* a dying girl. My very hand was wasted. Look at it now; brown as a berry, but so plump; you owe that to him: and, papa, I can walk twenty miles without fatigue: and so strong; I could take you up in my arms and carry you, I know. But I am content to eat you. (A shower of kisses.) "I hope you will like him."

"My own Helen. Ah! I am a happy old man this day. What is his name?"

"Mr. Hazel. He is a clergyman. Oh, papa, I hope you *will* like him, for he has saved my life more than once: and then he has been so generous, so delicate, so patient; for I used him very ill at first: and you will find my character as much improved as my health: and all owing to Mr. Hazel. He is a clergyman: and, oh,

so good, so humble, so clever, so self-denying! Ah! how can I ever repay him?"

"Well, I shall be glad to see this paragon, and shake him by the hand. You may imagine what I feel to any one that is kind to my darling. An old gentleman? About my age?"

"Oh no, papa."

"Hum!"

"If he had been old I should not be here; for he has had to fight me against cruel men with knives: and work like a horse. He built me a hut, and made me this cave, and almost killed himself in my service. Poor Mr. Hazel!"

"How old is he?"

"Dearest papa, I never asked him that: but I think he is four or five years older than me, and a hundred years better than I shall ever be, I am afraid. What is the matter, darling?"

"Nothing, child, nothing."

"Don't tell me. Can't I read your dear face?"

"Come, let me read yours. Look me in the face, now; full."

He took her by the shoulders, firmly, but not the least roughly, and looked straight into her hazel eyes. She blushed at this ordeal, blushed scarlet; but her eyes, pure as Heaven, faced his fairly, though with a puzzled look.

He concluded this paternal inspection by kissing her on the brow. "I was an old fool," he muttered.

"What do you say, dear papa?"

"Nothing, nothing. Kiss me again. Well, love, you had better find this guardian angel of yours, that I may take him by the hand and give him a father's blessing, and make him some little return by carrying him home to England along with my darling."

"I'll call him, papa. Where can he be gone, I wonder?"

She ran out to the terrace and called:

"Mr. Hazel! Mr. Hazel! I don't see him; but he can't be far off. Mr. Hazel!"

Then she came back and made her father sit down: and she sat at his knee, beaming with delight.

"Ah, papa," said she, "it was you who loved me best in England. It was you that came to look for me."

"No," said he, "there are others there that love you as well in their way. Poor Wardlaw! on his sick-bed for you, cut like a flower the moment he heard you were lost in the Proserpine. Ah, and I have broken faith."

"That is a story," said Helen; "you couldn't."

"For a moment, I mean; I promised the dear old man — he furnished the ship, the men, and the money, to find you. He says you are as much his daughter as mine."

"Well, but what did you promise him?" said Helen, blushing and interrupting hastily, for she could not bear the turn matters were now taking.

"Oh, only to give you the second kiss from Arthur. Come, better late than never." She knelt before him and put out her forehead instead of her lips. "There," said the general, "that kiss is from Arthur Wardlaw, your intended. Why, who the deuce is this?"

A young man was standing wonder-struck at the entrance, and had heard the general's last words; they went through him like a knife. General Rolleston stared at him.

Helen uttered an ejaculation of pleasure, and said, "This is my dear father, and he wants to thank you —"

"I don't understand this," said the general. "I thought you told me there was nobody on the island but you and your guardian angel. Did you count this

poor fellow for nobody? Why, he did you a good turn once."

"Oh, papa!" said Helen reproachfully. "Why, this *is* my guardian angel. This is Mr. Hazel."

The general looked from one to another in amazement, then he said to Helen, "This your Mr. Hazel?"

"Yes, papa."

"Why, you don't mean to tell me you don't know this man?"

"Know him, papa! why, of course I know Mr. Hazel; know him and revere him, beyond all the world, except you."

The general lost patience. "Are you out of your senses?" said he; "this man here is no Hazel. Why, this is James Seaton — our gardener — a ticket-of-leave man."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

At this fearful insult Helen drew back from her father with a cry of dismay, and then moved towards Hazel with her hands extended, as if to guard him from another blow, and at the same time deprecate his resentment. But then she saw his dejected attitude; and she stood confounded, looking from one to the other.

"I knew him in a moment by his beard," said the general, coolly.

"Ah!" cried Helen, and stood transfixed. She glared at Hazel and his beard with dilating eyes, and began to tremble.

Then she crept back to her father and held him tight; but still looked over her shoulder at Hazel with dilating eyes and paling cheek.

As for Hazel, his deportment all this time went far towards convicting him; he leaned against the side of the cave, and hung his head in silence: and his face was ashy pale. When General Rolleston saw his deep distress, and sudden terror and repugnance the revelation seemed to create in his daughter's mind, he felt sorry he had gone so far, and said, "Well, well; it is not for me to judge you harshly; for you have laid me under a deep obligation: and, after all, I can see good reasons why you should conceal your name from other people. But you ought to have told my daughter the truth."

Helen interrupted him; or rather, she seemed unconscious he was speaking. She had never for an instant taken her eye off the culprit: and now she spoke to him:

"Who, and what, are you, sir?"

"My name is Robert Penfold."

"Penfold! — Seaton!" cried Helen. "Alias upon alias!" And she turned to her father in despair. Then to Hazel again, "Are you what papa says?"

"I am."

"Oh, papa! papa!" cried Helen, "then there is no truth nor honesty in all the world." And she turned her back on Robert Penfold, and cried and sobbed upon her father's breast.

Oh, the amazement and anguish of that hour! The pure affection and reverence, that would have blessed a worthy man, wasted on a convict! Her heart's best treasures flung on a dunghill! This is a woman's greatest loss on earth. And Helen sank, and sobbed under it.

General Rolleston, whose own heart was fortified, took a shallow view of the situation; and, moreover, Helen's face was hidden on his bosom; and what he saw was Hazel's manly and intelligent countenance, pale, and dragged with agony and shame.

"Come, come," he said gently, "don't cry about it; it is not your fault: and don't be too hard on the man; you told me he had saved your life."

"Would he had not!" said the sobbing girl.

"There, Seaton," said the general. "Now you see the consequences of deceit: it wipes out the deepest obligations." He resumed, in a different tone, "But not with me. This is a woman: but I am a man, and know how a bad man could have abused the situation in which I found you two."

"Not worse than he has done," cried Helen.

"What do you tell me, girl!" said General Rolleston, beginning to tremble in his turn.

"What could he do worse than steal my esteem and

veneration, and drag my heart's best feelings in the dirt? Oh, where — where — can I ever look for a guide, instructor, and faithful friend, after this? He seemed all truth; and he is all a lie: the world is all a lie: would I could leave it this moment!"

"This is all romantic nonsense," said General Rolleston, beginning to be angry. "You are a little fool, and, in your ignorance and innocence, have no idea how well this young fellow has behaved on the whole. I tell you what; in spite of this one fault, I should like to shake him by the hand. I will, too: and then admonish him afterwards."

"You shall not. You shall not," cried Helen, seizing him almost violently by the arm. "You take him by the hand! A monster! How dare you steal into my esteem! How dare you be a miracle of goodness, self-denial, learning, and every virtue that a lady might worship, and thank God for, when all the time you are a vile, convicted —"

"I'll thank you not to say that word," said Hazel, firmly.

"I'll call you what you are, if I choose," said Helen, defiantly. But for all that she did not do it. She said piteously, "What offence had I ever given you? What crime had I ever committed, that you must make me the victim of this diabolical deceit? Oh, sir, what powers of mind you have wasted to achieve this victory over a poor unoffending girl! What was your motive? What good could come of it to you? He won't speak to me. He is not even penitent. Sullen and obstinate! He shall be taken to England, and well punished for it. Papa, it is your duty."

"Helen," said the general, "you ladies are rather too fond of hitting a man when he is down. And you speak daggers, as the saying is; and then wish you had bitten

your tongue off sooner. You are my child, but you are also a British subject; and, if you charge me on my duty to take this man to England and have him imprisoned, I must. But, before you go that length, you had better hear the whole story."

"Sir," said Robert Penfold, quietly, "I will go back to prison this minute, if she wishes it."

"How dare you interrupt papa?" said Helen, haughtily, but with a great sob.

"Come, come," said the general, "be quiet, both of you, and let me say my say. (To Robert.) You had better turn your head away, for I am a straightforward man, and I'm going to show her you are not a villain, but a madman. This Robert Penfold wrote me a letter, imploring me to find him some honest employment, however menial. That looked well; and I made him my gardener. He was a capital gardener; but one fine day he caught sight of you. *You* are a very lovely girl; though you don't seem to know it; and *he* is a madman; and he fell in love with you." Helen uttered an ejaculation of great surprise. The general resumed, "He can only have seen you at a distance, or you would recognize him; but (really it is laughable) he saw you somehow, though you did not see him, and— Well, his insanity hurt himself, and did not hurt you. You remember how he suspected burglars, and watched night after night under your window. That was out of love for you. His insanity took the form of fidelity and humble devotion. He got a wound for his pains, poor fellow! and you made Arthur Wardlaw get him a clerk's place."

"Arthur Wardlaw!" cried Seaton. "Was it to him I owed it?" and he groaned aloud.

Said Helen, "He hates poor Arthur, his benefactor." Then to Penfold, "If you are that James Seaton, you received a letter from me."

"I did," said Penfold; and putting his hand in his bosom he drew out a letter and showed it to her.

"Let me see it," said Helen.

"Oh, no! don't take this from me, too," said he, piteously.

General Rolleston continued. "The day you sailed he disappeared; and I am afraid not without some wild idea of being in the same ship with you. This was very reprehensible. Do you hear, young man? But what is the consequence? you get shipwrecked together, and the young madman takes such care of you that I find you well and hearty, and calling him your guardian angel. And, another thing to his credit, he has set his wits to work to restore you to the world. These ducks, one of which brings me here! Of course it was he who contrived that, not you. Young man, you must learn to look things in the face; this young lady is not of your sphere, to begin; and, in the next place, she is engaged to Mr. Arthur Wardlaw; and I am come out in his steamboat to take her to him. And as for you, Helen, take my advice, think what most convicts are compared to this one. Shut your eyes entirely to his folly, as I shall; and let you and me think only of his good deeds, and so make him all the return we can. You and I will go on board the steamboat directly; and, when we are there, we can tell Moreland there is somebody else on the island." He then turned to Penfold, and said, "My daughter and I will keep in the after-part of the vessel, and anybody that likes can leave the ship at Valparaiso. Helen, I know it is wrong; but what can I do? — I am so happy. You are alive and well: how can I punish or afflict a human creature to-day? and, above all, how can I crush this unhappy young man, without whom I should never have seen you again in this world? My daughter! my dear lost child!" and

he held her at arm's length and gazed at her, and then drew her to his bosom, and for him Robert Penfold ceased to exist, except as a man that had saved his daughter.

"Papa," said Helen, after a long pause, "just make him tell me why he could not trust to me. Why, he passed himself off to me for a clergyman."

"I am a clergyman," said Robert Penfold.

"Oh!" said Helen, shocked to find him so hardened, as she thought. She lifted her hands to heaven, and the tears streamed from her eyes. "Well, sir," said she, faintly. "I see I cannot reach your conscience. One question more, and then I have done with you forever. Why, in all these months that we have been alone, and that you have shown me the nature, I don't say of an honest man, but of an angel — yes, papa, of an angel — why could you not show me one humble virtue, sincerity? It belongs to a man. Why could you not say, 'I have committed one crime in my life, but repented forever; judge by this confession, and by what you have seen of me, whether I shall ever commit another. Take me as I am, and esteem me as a penitent and more worthy man; but I will not deceive you and pass for a paragon.' Why could you not say as much as this to me? If you loved me, why deceive me so cruelly?"

These words, uttered no longer harshly, but in a mournful, faint, despairing voice, produced an effect the speaker little expected. Robert Penfold made two attempts to speak, but, though he opened his mouth, and his lips quivered, he could get no word out. He began to choke with emotion; and, though he shed no tears, the convulsion, that goes with weeping in weaker natures, overpowered him in a way that was almost terrible.

"Confound it!" said General Rolleston; "this is

monstrous of you, Helen; it is barbarous. You are not like your poor mother."

She was pale and trembling, and the tears flowing; but she showed her native obstinacy. She said, hoarsely, "Papa, you are blind. He *must* answer me. He knows he must!"

"I must," said Robert Penfold, gasping still. Then he manned himself by a mighty effort, and repeated with dignity, "I will."

There was a pause while the young man still struggled for composure and self-command.

"Was I not often on the point of telling you my sad story? Then is it fair to say that I should never have told it you? But, oh! Miss Rolleston, you don't know what agony it may be to an unfortunate man to tell the truth. There are accusations so terrible, so *defiling*, that, when a man has proved them false, they still stick to him and soil him. Such an accusation I labor under, and a judge and jury have branded me. If they had called me a murderer I would have told you; but *that* is such a dirty crime. I feared the prejudices of the world. I dreaded to see your face alter to me. Yes, I trembled, and hesitated, and asked myself whether a man is bound to repeat a foul slander against himself, even when thirteen shallow men have said it, and made the lie law."

"There," said General Rolleston, "I thought how it would be, Helen; you have tormented him into defending himself, tooth and nail; so now we shall have the old story; he is innocent; I never knew a convict that wasn't, if he found a fool to listen to him. I decline to hear another word; you needn't excuse yourself for changing your name; I excuse it, and that is enough. But the boat is waiting, and we can't stay to hear you justify a felony."

"I AM NOT A FELON. I AM A MARTYR."

CHAPTER XLIX.

Robert Penfold drew himself up to his full height, and uttered these strange words with a sad majesty that was very imposing. But General Rolleston, steeled by experience of convicts, their plausibility, and their histrionic powers, was staggered only for a moment. He deigned no reply, but told Helen that Captain Moreland was waiting for her, and she had better go on board at once.

She stood like a statue.

"No, papa, I'll not turn my back on him till I know whether he is a felon or a martyr."

"My poor child, has he caught you at once with a clever phrase? A judge and a jury have settled that."

"They settled it as you would settle it, by refusing to hear me."

"Have I refused to hear you?" said Helen. "What do I care for steamboats and captains? If I stay here to all eternity, I'll know from your own lips and your own face, whether you are a felon or a martyr. It is no phrase, papa. He *is* a felon, or a martyr; and I am a most unfortunate girl, or else a base, disloyal one."

"Fiddle-dee," said General Rolleston, angrily. Then looking at his watch: "I give you five minutes to humbug us in — if you can."

Robert Penfold sighed patiently. But from that moment he ignored General Rolleston, and looked to Helen only. And she fixed her eyes upon his face with a tenacity and an intensity of observation, that surpassed anything he had ever seen in his life. It dazzled him; but it did not dismay him.

"Miss Rolleston," said he, "my history can be told in the time my prejudiced judge allows me. I am a clergyman, and a private tutor at Oxford. One of my pupils was — Arthur Wardlaw. I took an interest in him because my father, Michael Penfold, was in Wardlaw's employ. This Arthur Wardlaw had a talent for mimicry; he mimicked one of the college officers publicly and offensively, and that would have ruined his immediate prospects; for his father is just but stern. I fought hard for him, and, being myself popular with the authorities, I got him off. He was grateful, or seemed to be, and we became greater friends than ever. We confided in each other; he told me he was in debt in Oxford, and much alarmed lest it should reach his father's ears, and lose him the promised partnership; I told him I was desirous to buy a small living near Oxford, which was then vacant; but I had only saved four hundred pounds, and the price was a thousand pounds; I had no means of raising the balance. Then he said, 'Borrow two thousand pounds of my father; give me fourteen hundred of it, and take your own time to repay the six hundred pounds. I shall be my father's partner in a month or two,' said he; 'you can pay us back by instalments.' I thought this very kind of him. I did not want the living for myself, but to give my dear father certain comforts, and country air every week; he needed it; he was born in the country. Well, I came to London about this business: and a stranger called on me, and said he came from Mr. Arthur Wardlaw, who was not well enough to come himself. He produced a note of hand for two thousand pounds, signed John Wardlaw, and made me indorse it, and told me where to get it cashed; he would come next day for Arthur Wardlaw's share of the money. Well, I suspected no ill; would you? I went and got the note discounted,

and locked the money up: it was not my money: the greater part was Arthur Wardlaw's. That same evening a policeman called, and asked several questions, which of course I answered. He then got me out of the house on some pretence, and arrested me as a forger."

"Oh!" cried Helen.

"I forgot the clergyman: I was a gentleman, and a man, insulted, and I knocked the officer down directly. But his myrmidons overpowered me. I was tried at the Central Criminal Court on two charges. First, the Crown (as they call the attorney that draws the indictment) charged me with forging the note of hand; and then with not forging it, but passing it, well knowing that somebody else had forged it. Well, Undercliff, the expert, swore positively that the forged note was not written by me; and the Crown, as they call it, was defeated on that charge; but being proved a liar in a a court of justice did not abash my accuser; the second charge was pressed with equal confidence. The note, you are to understand, was forged: that admits of no doubt: and I passed it; the question was whether I passed it *knowing it to be forged.* How was that to be determined? And here it was that my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, destroyed me. Of course, as soon as I was put in prison, I wrote and sent to Arthur Wardlaw. Would you believe it? he would not come to me. He would not even write. Then as the time drew near, I feared he was a traitor. I treated him like one. I told my solicitor to drag him into court as my witness, and *make* him tell the truth. The clerk went down accordingly, and found he kept his doors always locked; but the clerk outwitted him, and served him with the subpœna in his bedroom, before he could crawl under the bed. But he baffled us at last: he never appeared in the witness-box; and, when my counsel asked the

court to imprison him, his father swore he could not come: he was dying, and all out of sympathy with me. Fine sympathy! that closed the lips, and concealed the truth; one syllable of which would have saved his friend and benefactor from a calamity worse than death. Is the truth poison, that to tell it makes a sick man die? Is the truth hell, that a dying man refuses to speak it? How can a man die better than speaking the truth? How can he die worse than withholding it? I believe his sickness and his death were lies like himself. For want of one word from Arthur Wardlaw, to explain that I had every reason to expect a note of hand from him, the jury condemned me. They were twelve honest, but shallow men — invited to go inside another man's bosom and guess what was there. They guessed that I knew and understood a thing, which to this hour I neither know nor understand, by God."

He paused a moment, then resumed, —

"I believe they founded their conjecture on my knocking down the officer. There was a reason for you! Why, forgers and their confederates are reptiles, and have no fight in them. Experience proves this. But these twelve men did not go by experience. They guessed, like babies, and, after much hesitation, condemned me; but recommended me to mercy. Mercy! What mercy did I deserve? Either I was innocent, or hanging was too good for me. No: in their hearts they doubted my guilt; and their doubt took that timid form, instead of acquitting me. I was amazed at the verdict, and asked leave to tell the judge why Arthur Wardlaw had defied the court, and absented himself as my witness. Had the judge listened for one minute, he would have seen I was innocent. But no. I was in England, where the mouth of the accused is stopped, if he is fool enough to employ counsel. The judge stopped my mouth, as your

father just now tried to stop it; and they branded me as a felon.

"Up to that moment my life was honorable and worthy. Since that moment I have never wronged a human creature. Men pass from virtue to vice, from vice to crime; this is the ladder a soul goes down; but you are invited to believe that I jumped from innocence into a filthy felony, and then jumped back again none the worse, and was a gardener that fought for his employer, and a lover that controlled his passion. It is a lie. A lie that ought not to take in a child. But prejudice degrades a man below the level of a child. I'll say no more: my patience is exhausted by wrongs and insults. I am as honest a man as ever breathed, and the place where we stand is mine, for I made it. Leave it and me this moment. Go to England, and leave me where the animals, more reasonable than you, have the sense to see my real character. I'll not sail in the same ship with any man, nor any woman either, who can look me in the face, and take me for a felon."

He swelled and towered with the just wrath of an honest man driven to bay; and his eye shot black lightning. He was sublime.

Helen cowered; but her spirited old father turned red, and said, haughtily, "We take you at your word, and leave you, you insolent vagabond. Follow me this instant, Helen!"

And he marched out of the cavern in a fury.

But, instead of following him, Helen stood stock-still and cowered, and cowered till she seemed sinking forward to the ground, and she got hold of Robert Penfold's hand, and kissed it, and moaned over it.

"Martyr! Martyr!" she whispered, and still kissed his hand, like a slave offering her master pity, and asking pardon.

"Martyr! Martyr! Every word is true — true as my love."

In this attitude, and with these words on her lips, they were surprised by General Rolleston, who came back, astonished at his daughter not following him. Judge of his amazement now.

"What does this mean?" he cried, turning pale with anger.

"It means that he has spoken the truth, and that I shall imitate him. He is my martyr and my love. When others cast shame on you, then it is time for me to show my heart. James Seaton, I love you for your madness, and your devotion to her whom you had only seen at a distance. Ah! that was love. John Hazel, I love you for all that has passed between us. What can any other man be to me? or woman to you? But most of all, I love *you*, Robert Penfold, — my hero and my martyr. When I am told to your face that you are a felon, then to your face I say you are my idol, my hero, and my martyr. Love! the word is too tame, too common. I worship you: I adore you. How beautiful you are when you are angry! How noble you are now you forgive me; for you do forgive me, Robert; you must, you shall. No; you will not send your Helen away from you, for her one fault so soon repented. Show me you forgive me; show me you love me still, almost as much as I love you. He is crying. Oh, my darling! my darling! my darling!" And she was round his neck in a moment, with tears and tender kisses, the first she had ever given him.

Ask yourself whether they were returned.

A groan, or rather we might say, a snort of fury, interrupted the most blissful moment either of these young creatures had ever known. It came from General Rolleston, now white with wrath and horror.

"You villain!" he cried.

Helen threw herself upon him, and put her hand before his mouth.

"Not a word more, or I shall forget I am your daughter. No one is to blame but I. I love him. I made him love me. He has been trying hard not to love me so much. But I am a woman; and could not deny myself the glory and the joy of being loved better than woman was ever loved before. And so I am; I am. Kill me, if you like; insult me, if you will: but not a word against him, or I give him my hand, and we live and die together on this island. Oh, papa! he has often saved that life you value so; and I have saved his. He is all the world to me. Have pity on your child! Have pity on him who carries my heart in his bosom!"

She flung herself on her knees, and strained him tight, and implored him, with head thrown back, and little clutching hands, and eloquent eyes.

Ah! it is hard to resist the voice and look and clinging of a man's own flesh and blood. Children are so strong — upon their knees: their dear faces, bright copies of our own, are just the height of our hearts then.

The old man was staggered, was almost melted. "Give me a moment to think," said he, in a broken voice. "This blow takes my breath away."

Helen rose and laid her head upon her father's shoulder, and still pleaded for her love by her soft touch and her tears that now flowed freely.

He turned to Penfold with all the dignity of age and station. "Mr. Penfold," said he, with grave politeness, "after what my daughter has said, I must treat you as a man of honor, or I must insult her. Well then, I expect you to show me you are what she thinks you, and are not what a court of justice has proclaimed you. Sir, this young lady is engaged with her own free will to a gen-

tleman who is universally esteemed, and has never been accused *to his face* of an unworthy act. Relying on her plighted word, the Wardlaws have fitted out a steamer and searched the Pacific, and found her. Can you, as a man of honor, advise her to stay here and compromise her own honor in every way? Ought she to break faith with her betrothed on account of vague accusations made behind his back?"

"It was only in self-defence I accused Mr. Arthur Wardlaw," said Robert Penfold.

General Rolleston resumed.

"You said just now there are accusations which soil a man. If you were in my place, would you let your daughter marry a man of honor, who had unfortunately been found guilty of a felony?"

Robert groaned and hesitated, but he said, "No."

"Then what is to be done? She must either keep her plighted word, or else break it. For whom? For a gentleman she esteems and loves, but cannot marry. A leper may be a saint; but I would rather bury my child than marry her to a leper. A convict may be a saint; but I'll kill her with my own hand sooner than she shall marry a convict: and in your heart and conscience you cannot blame me. Were you a father you would do the same. What then remains for her and me, but to keep faith; and what can you do better, than leave her, and carry away her everlasting esteem and her father's gratitude? It is no use being good by halves, or bad by halves. You must either be a selfish villain, and urge her to abandon all shame and live here on this island with you forever, or you must be a brave and honest man, and bow to a parting that is inevitable. Consider, sir; your eloquence and her pity have betrayed this young lady into a confession that separates you. Her enforced residence here with you has been innocent. It

would be innocent no longer, now she has been so mad as to own she loves you. And I tell you frankly, if after that confession, you insist on going on board the steamer with her, I must take you; humanity requires it; but if I do, I shall hand you over to the law as a convict escaped before his time. Perhaps I ought to do so as it is; but that is not certain: I don't know to what country this island belongs; I may have no right to capture you in strange dominions; but an English ship is England, — and if you set your foot on the Springbok you are lost. Now then, you are a man of honor; you love my child truly, and not selfishly; you have behaved nobly until to-day; go one step farther on the right road: call worldly honor, and the God whose vows you have taken, sir, to your aid, and do your duty."

"Oh, man! man!" cried Robert Penfold, "you ask more of me than flesh and blood can bear. What shall I say? What shall I do?"

Helen replied, calmly: "Take my hand, and let us die together, since we cannot live together with honor."

General Rolleston groaned. "For this, then, I have traversed one ocean, and searched another, and found my child. I am nothing to her — nothing. Oh, who would be a father!" He sat down oppressed with shame and grief, and bowed his stately head in manly but pathetic silence.

"Oh, papa! papa!" cried Helen, "forgive your ungrateful child!" and she kneeled and sobbed, with her forehead on his knees.

Then Robert Penfold, in the midst of his own agony, found room in that great suffering heart of his for pity. He knelt down himself, and prayed for help in this bitter trial. He rose haggard with the struggle, but languid and resigned, like one whose death-warrant has been read.

"Sir," said he, "there is but one way. You must take her home; and I shall stay here."

"Leave you all alone on this island!" said Helen. "Never! If you stay here, I shall stay to comfort you."

"I decline that offer. I am beyond the reach of comfort."

"Think what you do, Robert," said Helen, with unnatural calmness. "If you have no pity on yourself, have pity on us. Would you rob me of the very life you have taken such pains to save? My poor father will carry nothing to England but my dead body. Long before we reach that country I loved so well, and now hate it for its stupidity and cruelty to you, my soul will have flown back to this island to watch over you, Robert. You bid me abandon you to solitude and despair. Neither of you two love me half as much as I love you both."

General Rolleston sighed deeply. "If I thought that," said he — then in a faint voice, "my own courage fails me now. I look into my heart, and I see my child's life is dearer to me than all the world. She was dying, they say. Suppose I send Moreland to the continent for a clergyman, and marry you. Then you can live on this island forever. Only you must let me live here too: for I could never show my face again in England after acting so dishonorably. It will be a miserable end of a life passed in honor; but I suppose it will not be for long. Shame can kill as quickly as disappointed love."

"Robert! Robert!" cried Helen in agony.

The martyr saw that he was master of the situation, and must be either base or very noble — there was no middle way. He leaned his head on his hands, and thought with all his might.

"Hush!" said Helen: "he is wiser than we are. Let him speak."

"If I thought you would pine and die upon the voyage,

no power should part us. But you are not such a coward. If my life depended on yours, would you not live?"

"You know I would."

"When I was wrecked on White Water Island, you played the man. Not one woman in a thousand could have launched a boat, and sailed it with a boat-hook for a mast, and — "

Helen interrupted him. "It was nothing; I loved you. I love you better now."

"I believe it, and therefore I ask you to rise above your sex once more, and play the man for me. This time it is not my life you are to rescue, but that which is more precious still: my good name."

"Ah! that would be worth living for," cried Helen.

"You will find it very hard to do; but not harder for a woman, than to launch a boat, and sail her without a mast. See my father, Michael Penfold. See Undercliff, the expert. See the solicitor — the counsel. Sift the whole story; and above all, find out why Arthur Wardlaw dared not enter the witness-box. Be obstinate as a man; be supple as a woman; and don't talk of dying, when there is a friend to be rescued from dishonor by living and working."

"Die! while I can rescue you from death or dishonor! I will not be so base. Ah, Robert, Robert, how well you know me!"

"Yes, I do know you, Helen. I believe that great soul of yours will keep your body strong to do this great work for him you love, and who loves you. And as for me, I am man enough to live for years upon this island, if you will only promise me two things."

"I promise, then."

"Never to die, and never to marry Arthur Wardlaw, until you have reversed that lying sentence which has blasted me. Lay your hand on your father's head, and promise me that."

Helen laid her hand upon her father's head, and said, "I pledge my honor not to die, if life is possible, and never to marry any man, until I have reversed that lying sentence, which has blasted the angel I love."

"And I pledge myself to help her," said General Rolleston, warmly, "for now I *know* you are a man of honor. I have too often been deceived by eloquence to listen much to that. But now you have proved by your actions what you are. You, pass a forged check, knowing it to be forged! I'd stake my salvation it's a lie. There's my hand. God comfort you! God reward you, my noble fellow!"

"I hope He will, sir," sobbed Robert Penfold. "You are her father; and you take my hand; perhaps that will be sweet to think of by-and-by; but no joy can enter my heart now; it is broken. Take her away at once, sir. Flesh is weak. My powers of endurance are exhausted."

General Rolleston acted promptly on this advice. He rolled up her rugs, and the things she had made, and Robert had the courage to take them down to the boat. Then he came back, and the general took her bag to the boat.

All this time the girl herself sat wringing her hands in anguish, and not a tear. It was beyond that now.

As he passed Robert, the general said, "Take leave of her alone. I will come for her in five minutes. You see, how sure I feel you are a man of honor."

When Robert went in, she rose and tottered to him, and fell on his neck. She saw it was the death-bed of their love, and she kissed his eyes, and clung to him. They moaned over each other, and clung to each other, in mute despair.

The general came back, and he and Robert took Helen, shivering and fainting, to the boat. As the boat put off, she awoke from her stupor, and put out her hands to Robert with one piercing cry.

They were parted.

CHAPTER L.

In that curious compound the human heart, a respectable motive is sometimes connected with a criminal act. And it was so with Joseph Wylie; he had formed an attachment to Nancy Rouse, and her price was two thousand pounds.

This Nancy Rouse was a character. She was General Rolleston's servant for many years; her place was the kitchen; but she was a woman of such restless activity, and so wanting in the proper pride of a servant, that she would help a housemaid, or a lady's maid, or do anything almost, except be idle. To use her own words, she was one as couldn't abide to sit mumchance. That fatal foe to domestic industry, the *London Journal*, fluttered in vain down her area, for she could not read. She supported a sick mother out of her wages, aided by a few presents of money and clothes from Helen Rolleston, who had a great regard for Nancy, and knew what a hard fight she had to keep a sick woman out of her twenty pounds a year.

In love, Nancy was unfortunate; her buxom looks, and sterling virtues, were balanced by a provoking sagacity, and an irritating habit of speaking her mind. She humbled her lovers' vanity one after another, and they fled. Her heart smarted more than once.

Nancy was ambitious; and her first rise in life took place as follows: When the Rollestons went to Australia, she had a good cry at parting with Helen; but there was no help for it, she could not leave her mother. However, she told Helen she could not stomach any other service,

and, since she must be parted, was resolved to better herself. This phrase is sometimes drolly applied by servants, because they throw Independence into the scale. In Nancy's case it meant setting up as a washerwoman. Helen opened her hazel eyes with astonishment at this, the first round in the ladder of Nancy's ambition; however, she gave her ten pounds, and thirty introductions, twenty-five of which missed fire, and with the odd five Nancy set up her tub in the suburbs, and by her industry, geniality, and frugality, got on tolerably well. In due course she rented a small house backed by a small green, and advertised for a gentleman lodger. She soon got one; and soon got rid of him. However, she was never long without one.

Nancy met Joseph Wylie in company; and, as sailors are brisk wooers, he soon became her acknowledged suitor, and made some inroad into her heart, though she kept on the defensive, warned by past experience.

Wylie's love-making had a droll feature about it; it was most of it carried on in the presence of three washerwomen, because Nancy had no time to spare from her work, and Wylie had no time to lose in his wooing, being on shore for a limited period. And this absence of superfluous delicacy on his part gave him an unfair advantage over the tallowchandler's foreman, his only rival at present. Many a sly thrust, and many a hearty laugh, from his female auditors, greeted his amorous eloquence; but, for all that, they sided with him, and Nancy felt her importance, and brightened along with her mates at the sailor's approach, which was generally announced by a cheerful hail. He was good company, to use Nancy's own phrase, and she accepted him as a sweetheart on probation. But, when Mr. Wylie urged her to marry him, she demurred, and gave a string of reasons, all of which the sailor and his allies, the subordinate washerwomen, combated in full conclave.

Then she spoke out, "My lad, the wash-tub is a saddle as won't carry double. I've seen poverty enough in my mother's house, it sha'n't come in at my door to drive love out o' window. Two comes together with just enough for two; next year instead of two they are three, and one of the three can't work and wants a servant extra, and by and by there is half a dozen, and the money coming in at the spigot and going out at the bung-hole."

One day, in the middle of his wooing, she laid down her iron, and said, "You come along with me. And I wonder how much work will be done whilst my back is turned, for you three gabbling and wondering whatever I'm going to do with this here sailor."

She took Wylie a few yards down the street, and showed him a large house with most of the windows broken. "There," said she, "there's a sight for a sea-faring man. That's in chancery."

"Well, it's better to be there than in H——," said Wylie, meaning to be sharp.

"Wait till you've tried 'em both," said Nancy.

Then she took him to the back of the house, and showed him a large garden attached to it.

"Now, Joseph," said she, "I've showed you a lodging-house and a drying-ground; and I'm a cook and a clear starcher, and I'm wild to keep lodgers and do for 'em, washing and all. Then, if their foul linen goes out, they follows it: the same if they has their meat from the cook-shop. Four hundred pounds a year lies there a-waiting for me. I've been at them often to let me them premises; but they says no, we have got no horder from the court to let. Which the court would rather see 'em go to rack and ruin for nothing, than let 'em to an honest woman as would pay the rent punctual, and make her penny out of 'em, and nobody none the worse. And to sell them, the price is two thousand pounds, and if I

had it I'd give it this minnit; but where are the likes of you and me to get two thousand pounds? But the lawyer he says, 'Miss Rouse, from *you* one thousand down, and the rest on mortgige at forty-five pounds the year,' which it is dirt cheap, I say. So now, my man, when that house is mine, I'm yours. I'm putting by for it o' my side. If you means all you say, why not save a bit o' yours? Once I get that house and garden, you needn't go to sea no more: nor you sha'n't. If I am to be bothered with a man, let me know where to put my finger on him at all hours, and not lie shivering and shaking at every window as creaks, and him out at sea. And if you are too proud to drive the linen in a light cart, why I could pay a man." In short, she told him plainly she would not marry till she was above the world; and the road to above the world was through that great battered house and seedy garden, in chancery.

Now it may appear a strange coincidence that Nancy's price to Wylie was two thousand pounds, and Wylie's to Wardlaw was two thousand pounds; but the fact is, it was a forced coincidence. Wylie, bargaining with Wardlaw, stood out for two thousand pounds, because that was the price of the house and garden and Nancy.

Now when Wylie returnd to England safe after his crime and his perils, he comforted himself with the reflection that Nancy would have her house and garden, and he should have Nancy.

But young Wardlaw lay on his sick bed; his father was about to return to the office, and the gold disguised as copper was ordered up to the cellars in Fenchurch Street. There, in all probability, the contents would be examined ere long, the fraud exposed, and other unpleasant consequences might follow over and above the loss of the promised two thousand pounds.

Wylie felt very disconsolate, and went down to Nancy

Rouse depressed in spirits. To his surprise she received him with more affection than ever, and, reading his face in a moment, told him not to fret.

"It will be so in your way of life," said this homely comforter; "your sort comes home empty-handed one day, and money in both pockets the next. I'm glad to see you home at all, for I've been in care about you. You're very welcome, Joe. If you are come home honest and sober, why that is the next best thing to coming home rich."

Wylie hung his head and pondered these words; and well he might, for he had not come home either so sober or so honest as he went out, but quite as poor.

However his elastic spirits soon revived in Nancy's sunshine, and he became more in love with her than ever.

But when, presuming upon her affection, he urged her to marry him, and trust to Providence, she laughed in his face.

"Trust to himprovidence you mean," said she; "no, no, Joseph. If you are unlucky, I must be lucky, before you and me can come together."

Then Wylie resolved to have his two thousand pounds at all risks. He had one great advantage over a landsman who has committed a crime; he could always go to sea, and find employment, first in one ship and then in another. Terra firma was not one of the necessaries of life to him.

He came to Wardlaw's office to feel his way, and talked guardedly to Michael Penfold about the loss of the Proserpine. His apparent object was to give information, his real object was to gather it. He learned that old Wardlaw was very much occupied with fitting out a steamer, that the forty chests of copper had actually come up from the Shannon and were under their feet at that

moment, and that young Wardlaw was desperately ill, and never came to the office. Michael had not at that time learned the true cause of young Wardlaw's illness. Yet Wylie detected that young Wardlaw's continued absence from the office gave Michael singular uneasiness. The old man fidgeted, and washed the air with his hands, and with simple cunning urged Wylie to go and see him about the Proserpine, and get him to the office, if it was only for an hour or two. "Tell him we are all sixes and sevens, Mr. Wylie; all at sixes and sevens."

"Well," said Wylie, affecting a desire to oblige, "give me a line to him, for I've been twice and could never get in."

Michael wrote an earnest line to say that Wardlaw senior had been hitherto much occupied in fitting out the Springbok, but that he was going into the books next week. What was to be done?

The note was received; but Arthur declined to see the bearer. Then Wylie told the servant it was Joseph Wylie, on a matter of life and death. "Tell him I must stand on the staircase and hallo it out, if he won't hear it any other way."

This threat obtained his admission to Arthur Wardlaw. The sailor found him on a sofa in a darkened room, pale and worn to a shadow.

"Mr. Wardlaw," said Wylie, firmly, "you mustn't think I don't feel for you; but, sir, we are gone too far to stop, you and me. There are two sides to this business; it is a hundred and fifty thousand pounds for you, and two thousand pounds for me, or it is —"

"What do I care for money now?" groaned Wardlaw. "Let it all go to the devil, who tempted me to destroy her I loved better than money, better than all the world."

"Well, but hear me out," said Wylie. "I say it is a hundred and fifty thousand pounds to you, and two thou-

sand pounds to me, or else it is twenty years' penal servitude to both on us."

"Penal servitude!" And the words roused the merchant from his lethargy like a shower-bath.

"You know that well enough," said Wylie. "Why, 'twas a hanging matter a few years ago. Come, come, there are no two ways: you must be a man, or we are undone."

Fear prevailed in that timorous breast, which even love of money had failed to rouse. Wardlaw sat up, staring wildly, and asked Wylie what he was to do.

"First let me ring for a bottle of that old brandy of yours."

The brandy was got. Wylie induced him to drink a wineglassful neat, and then to sit at the table, and examine the sailors' declaration and the log. "I'm no great scholard," said he. "I warn't a-going to lay these before the underwriters, till you had overhauled them. There, take another drop now, — 'twill do you good, — while I draw up this thundering blind."

Thus encouraged and urged, the broken-hearted schemer languidly compared the seaman's declaration with the log; and, even in his feeble state of mind and body, made an awkward discovery at once.

"Why, they don't correspond," said he.

"What don't correspond?"

"Your men's statement and the ship's log. The men speak of one heavy gale after another, in January, and the pumps going; but the log says, 'A puff of wind from the N.E.' And here, again, the entry exposes your exaggeration; one branch of our evidence contradicts the other. This comes of trying to prove too much. You must say the log was lost: went down with the ship."

"How can I?" cried Wylie. "I have told too many I had got it safe at home."

"Why did you say that? What madness!"

"Why were you away from your office at such a time? How can I know everything, and do everything? I counted on you for the head-work ashore. Can't ye think of any way to square the log to that part of our tale? Might paste in a leaf or two, eh?"

"That would be discovered at once. You have committed an irremediable error. What broad strokes this Hudson makes! He must have written with the stump of a quill."

Wylie received this last observation with a look of contempt for the mind that could put so trivial a question in so great an emergency.

"Are you quite sure poor Hudson is dead?" asked Wardlaw, in a low voice.

"Dead! Don't I tell you I saw him die!" said Wylie, trembling all of a sudden.

He took a glass of brandy, and sent it flying down his throat.

"Leave the paper with me," said Arthur, languidly, "and tell Penfold I'll crawl to the office to-morrow. You can meet me there. I shall see nobody else."

Wylie called next day at the office, and was received by Penfold, who had now learned the cause of Arthur's grief, and ushered the visitor in to him with looks of benevolent concern. Arthur was seated like a lunatic, pale and motionless. On the table before him was a roast fowl and a salad, which he had forgotten to eat. His mind appeared to alternate between love and fraud, for, as soon as he saw Wylie, he gave himself a sort of a shake, and handed Wylie the log and the papers.

"Examine them. They agree better with each other now."

Wylie examined the log, and started with surprise and superstitious terror. "Why, Hiram's ghost has been

here at work!" said he. "It is his very handwriting."

"Hush!" said Wardlaw; "not so loud. Will it do?"

"The writing will do first-rate; but any one can see this log has never been to sea."

Inspired by the other's ingenuity, he then, after a moment's reflection, emptied the salt-cellar into a plate, and poured a little water over it. He wetted the leaves of the log with this salt water, and dog's-eared the whole book.

Wardlaw sighed. "See what expedients we are driven to," said he. He then took a little soot from the chimney, and mixed it with salad-oil. He applied some of this mixture to the parchment cover, rubbed it off, and, by much manipulation, gave it a certain mellow look, as if it had been used by working-hands.

Wylie was armed with these materials, and furnished with money to keep his sailors to their tale, in case of their being examined.

Arthur begged, in his present affliction, to be excused from going personally into the matter of the Proserpine; and said that Penfold had the ship's log, and the declaration of the survivors, which the insurers could inspect, previously to their being deposited at Lloyds'.

The whole thing wore an excellent face, and nobody found a peg to hang suspicion on so far.

After this preliminary, and the deposit of the papers, nothing was hurried. The merchant, absorbed in his grief, seemed to be forgetting to ask for his money. Wylie remonstrated; but Arthur convinced him they were still on too ticklish ground to show any hurry, without exciting suspicion.

And so passed two weary months, during which Wylie fell out of Nancy Rouse's good graces for idling about doing nothing.

"Be you a-waiting for the plum to fall into your mouth, young man?" said she.

The demand was made on the underwriters, and Arthur contrived that it should come from his father. The firm was of excellent repute, and had paid hundreds of insurances without a loss to the underwriters. The Proserpine had foundered at sea. Several lives had been lost; and of the survivors, one had since died, owing to the hardships he had endured. All this betokened a genuine calamity. Nevertheless, one ray of suspicion rested on the case at first. The captain of the Proserpine had lost a great many ships; and, on the first announcement, one or two were resolved to sift the matter on that ground alone. But, when five eye-witnesses, suppressing all mention of the word "drink," declared that Captain Hudson had refused to leave the vessel, and described his going down with the ship, from an obstinate and too exalted sense of duty, every chink was closed; and, to cut the matter short, the insurance money was paid to the last shilling, and Benson, one of the small underwriters, ruined. Nancy Rouse, who worked for Mrs. Benson, lost eighteen shillings and sixpence, and was dreadfully put out about it.

Wylie heard her lamentations, and grinned; for now his two thousand pounds was as good as in his pocket, he thought. Great was his consternation when Arthur told him that every shilling of the money was forestalled, and that the entire profit of the transaction was yet to come; viz., by the sale of the gold-dust.

"Then sell it," said Wylie.

"I dare not. The affair must cool down before I can appear as a seller of gold: and even then, I must dribble it out with great caution. Thank Heaven it is no longer in those cellars!"

"Where is it, then?"

"That is my secret. You will get your two thousand all in good time; and, if it makes you one-tenth part as wretched as it has made me, you will thank me for all these delays."

At last Wylie lost all patience, and began to show his teeth; and then Arthur Wardlaw paid him his two thousand pounds in forty crisp notes.

He crammed them into a side pocket, and went down triumphant to Nancy Rouse. Through her parlor window he saw the benign countenance of Michael Penfold. He then remembered Penfold had told him, some time before, that he was going to lodge with her, as soon as the present lodger should go.

This, however, rather interrupted Wylie's design of walking in and chucking the two thousand pounds into Nancy's lap. On the contrary, he shoved them deeper down in his pocket, and resolved to see the old gentleman to bed, and then produce his pelf, and fix the wedding-day with Nancy.

He came in, and found her crying, and Penfold making weak efforts to console her. The tea-things were on the table, and Nancy's cup half emptied.

Wylie came in and said, "Why, what is the matter now?"

He said this mighty cheerfully, as one who carried the panacea for all ills in his pocket, and a medicine peculiarly suited to Nancy Rouse's constitution. But he had not quite fathomed her yet.

As soon as ever she saw him she wiped her eyes, and asked him, grimly, what he wanted there. Wylie stared at the reception, but replied, stoutly, that it was pretty well known by this time what he wanted in that quarter.

"Well, then," said Nancy, "want will be your master. Why did you never tell me Miss Helen was in that ship? my sweet, dear mistress as was, that I feel for like a

mother. You left her to drown, and saved your own great useless carcass, and drownded she is, poor dear. Get out o' my sight, do."

"It wasn't my fault, Nancy," said Wylie, earnestly. "I didn't know who she was, and I advised her to come with us; but she would go with that parson chap."

"What parson chap? What a liar you be! She is Wardlaw's sweetheart, and don't care for no parsons. If you didn't know who was to blame, why didn't you tell me a word of your own accord? You kept dark. Do you call yourself a man, to leave my poor young lady to shift for herself?"

"She had as good a chance to live as I had," said Wylie, sullenly.

"No, she hadn't; you took care o' yourself. Well, since you are so fond of yourself, keep yourself *to* yourself, and don't come here no more. After this, I hate the sight on ye. You are like the black dog in my eyes, and always will be. Poor, dear Miss Helen! Ah, I cried when she left — my mind misgave me; but little I thought she would perish in the salt seas, and all for want of a man in the ship. If you had gone out again after in the steamboat — Mr. Penfold have told me all about it — I'd believe you weren't so much to blame. But no; lolloping and looking about all day for months. There's my door, Joe Wylie; I can't cry comfortable before you, as had a hand in drownding of her. You and me is parted forever. I'll die as I am, or I'll marry a *man;* which you ain't one, nor nothing like one. Is he waiting for you to hold the door open, Mr. Penfolds? or don't I speak plain enough? Them as I gave the sack to afore you didn't want so much telling."

"Well, I'm going," said Wylie, sullenly; then, with considerable feeling, "This is hard lines."

But Nancy was inexorable, and turned him out, with the two thousand pounds in his pocket.

He took the notes out, and flung them furiously down in the dirt.

Then he did what everybody does under similar circumstances: he picked them up again, and pocketed them along with the other dirt they had gathered.

Next day he went down to the docks, and looked out for a ship; he soon got one, and signed as second mate. She was to sail in a fortnight.

But, before a week was out, the banknotes had told so upon him, that he was no longer game to go to sea. But the captain he had signed with was a Tartar, and not to be trifled with. He consulted a knowing friend, and that friend advised him to disguise himself till the ship had sailed. Accordingly, he rigged himself out with a long coat, and a beard, and spectacles, and hid his sea-slouch as well as he could, and changed his lodgings. Finding he succeeded so well, he thought he might as well have the pleasure of looking at Nancy Rouse, if he could not talk to her. So he actually had the hardihood to take the parlor next door; and by this means he heard her move about in her room, and caught a sight of her at work on her little green; and he was shrewd enough to observe she did not sing and whistle as she used to do. The dog chuckled at that.

His banknotes worried him night and day. He was afraid to put them in a bank, afraid to take them about with him into his haunts; afraid to leave them at home; and out of his perplexity arose some incidents worth relating in their proper order.

Arthur Wardlaw returned to business, but he was a changed man. All zest in the thing was gone. His

fraud set him above the world, and that was now enough for him, in whom ambition was dead, and, indeed, nothing left alive in him but deep regrets.

He drew in the horns of speculation, and went on in the old safe routine; and to the restless activity that had jeopardized the firm, succeeded a strange torpidity. He wore black for Helen, and sorrowed without hope. He felt he had offended Heaven, and had met his punishment in Helen's death.

Wardlaw senior retired to Elmtrees, and seldom saw his son. When they did meet, the old man sometimes whispered hope, but the whisper was faint and unheeded.

One day Wardlaw senior came up express, to communicate a letter to Arthur from General Rolleston, written at Valparaiso. In this letter General Rolleston deplored his unsuccessful search, but said he was going westward, upon the report of a Dutch whaler, who had seen an island reflected in the sky, while sailing between Juan Fernandez and Norfolk Isle.

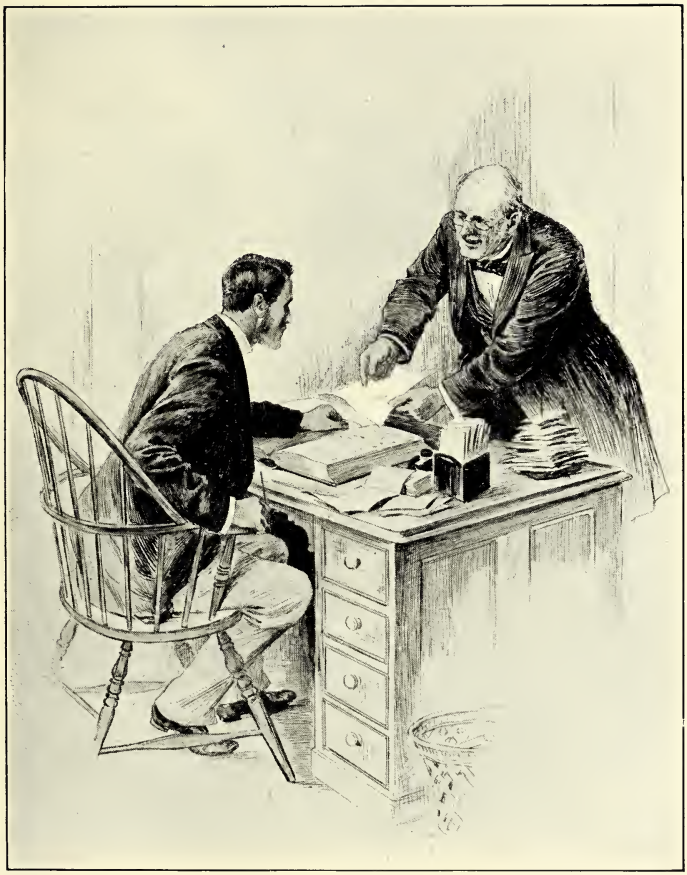
Arthur only shook his head with a ghastly smile. "*She* is in heaven," said he, "and I shall never see her again, neither here nor hereafter."

Wardlaw senior was shocked at this speech, but he made no reply. He pitied his son too much to criticise the expressions into which his bitter grief betrayed him. He was old, and had seen the triumphs of time over all things human, sorrow included. These, however, as yet, had done nothing for Arthur Wardlaw. At the end of six months his grief was as sombre and as deadly as the first week.

But one day, as this pale figure in deep mourning sat at his table, going listlessly and mechanically through the business of scraping money together for others to enjoy, whose hearts, unlike his, might not be in the grave, his father burst in upon him, with a telegram in

his hand, and waved it over his head in triumph. "She is found! she is found!" he roared: "read that!" and thrust the telegram into his hands.

Those hands trembled, and the languid voice rose into shrieks of astonishment and delight, as Arthur read the words, "We have got her alive and well: shall be at Charing Cross Hotel, 8 P.M."



"SHE IS FOUND! SHE IS FOUND!" HE ROARED: "READ THAT!"

CHAPTER LI.

WHILST the boat was going to the Springbok, General Rolleston whispered to Captain Moreland; and what he said may be almost guessed from what occurred on board the steamer soon afterwards. Helen was carried trembling to the cabin, and the order was given to heave the anchor and get under way. A groan of disappointment ran through the ship; Captain Moreland expressed the general's regret to the men, and divided two hundred pounds upon the capstan, and the groan ended in a cheer.

As for Helen's condition, that was at first mistaken for ill health. She buried herself for two whole days in her cabin; and from that place faint moans were heard now and then. The sailors called her the sick lady.

Heaven knows what she went through in that forty-eight hours.

She came upon deck at last in a strange state of mind and body, restless, strung up, absorbed. The rare vigor she had acquired on the island came out now with a vengeance. She walked the deck with a briskness and a pertinacity that awakened admiration in the crew at first, but by and by superstitious awe. For, while the untiring feet went briskly to and fro over leagues and leagues of plank every day, the great hazel eyes were turned inwards, and the mind, absorbed with one idea, skimmed the men and things about her listlessly.

She had a mission to fulfil, and her whole nature was stringing itself up to do the work.

She walked so many miles a day, partly from excitement, partly with a deliberate resolve to cherish her

health and strength. "I may want them both," said she, "to clear Robert Penfold." Thought and high purpose shone through her so, that after awhile nobody dared trouble her much with commonplaces. To her father she was always sweet and filial, but sadly cold compared with what she had always been hitherto. He was taking her body to England, but her heart stayed behind upon that island; he saw this, and said it.

"Forgive me," said she, coldly, and that was all her reply.

Sometimes she had violent passions of weeping: and then he would endeavor to console her: but in vain. They ran their course, and were succeeded by the bodily activity and concentration of purpose they had interrupted for a little while.

At last, after a rapid voyage, they drew near the English coast; and then General Rolleston, who had hitherto spared her feelings, and been most indulgent and considerate, felt it was high time to come to an understanding as to the course they should both pursue.

"Now, Helen," said he, "about the Wardlaws!"

Helen gave a slight shudder. But she said, after a slight hesitation, "Let me know your wishes."

"Oh, mine are, not to be too ungrateful to the father, and not to deceive the son."

"I will not be ungrateful to the father, nor deceive the son," said Helen, firmly.

The general kissed her brow, and called her his brave girl. "But," said he, "on the other hand, it must not be published that you have been for eight months on an island alone with a convict. Anything sooner than that. You know the malice of your own sex; if one of the ladies, who kiss you at every visit, gets hold of that, you will be an outcast from society."

Helen blushed and trembled. "Nobody need be told

that but Arthur; and I am sure he loves me well enough not to injure me with the world."

"But he would be justified in declining your hand, after such a revelation."

"Quite. And I hope he will decline it, when he knows I love another, however hopelessly."

"You are going to tell Arthur Wardlaw all that?"

"I am."

"Then all I can say is, you are not like other women."

"I have been brought up by a man."

"If I were Arthur Wardlaw, it would be the last word you should ever speak to me."

"If you were Arthur Wardlaw, I should be on that dear island now."

"Well, suppose his love should be greater than his spirit, and"—

"If he does not go back, when he hears of my hopeless love, I don't see how I can. I shall marry him: and try with all my soul to love him. I'll open every door in London to Robert Penfold: except one; my husband's. And that door, while I live, he shall never enter. Oh, my heart; my heart!" She burst out sobbing desperately: and her father laid her head upon his bosom, and sighed deeply, and asked himself how all this would end.

Before they landed, her fortitude seemed to return; and of her own accord she begged her father to telegraph to the Wardlaws.

"Would you not like a day to compose yourself, and prepare for this trying interview?" said he.

"I should: but it is mere weakness. And I must cure myself of weakness, or I shall never clear Robert Penfold. And then, papa, I think of you. If old Mr. Wardlaw heard you had been a day in town, you might suffer in his good opinion. We shall be in London at

seven. Ask them at eight. That will be one hour's respite. God help me!"

Long before eight o'clock that day, Arthur Wardlaw had passed from a state of sombre misery and remorse to one of joy, exultation, and unmixed happiness. He no longer regretted his crime, nor the loss of the Proserpine: Helen was alive and well, and attributed not her danger but only her preservation to the Wardlaws.

Wardlaw senior kept his carriage in town, and precisely at eight o'clock they drove up to the door of the hotel.

They followed the servant with bounding hearts, and rushed into the room where the general and Helen stood ready to receive them. Old Wardlaw went to the general with both hands out, and so the general met him, and between these two it was almost an embrace. Arthur ran to Helen with cries of joy and admiration, and kissed her hands again and again, and shed such genuine tears of joy over them that she trembled all over, and was obliged to sit down. He kneeled at her feet, and still imprisoned one hand, and mumbled it, while she turned her head away and held her other hand before her face to hide its real expression, which was a mixture of pity and repugnance. But, as her face was hidden, and her eloquent body quivered, and her hand was not withdrawn, it seemed a sweet picture of feminine affection to those who had not the key.

At last she was relieved from a most embarrassing situation by old Wardlaw; he cried out on this monopoly, and Helen instantly darted out of her chair and went to him and put up her cheek to him, which he kissed; and then she thanked him warmly for his courage in not despairing of her life, and his goodness in sending out a ship for her.

Now, the fact is, she could not feel grateful; but she knew she ought to be grateful, and she was ashamed to show no feeling at all in return for so much; so she was eloquent, and the old gentleman was naturally very much pleased at first; but he caught an expression of pain on Arthur's face, and then he stopped her. "My dear," said he, "you ought to thank Arthur, not me; it is his love for you which was the cause of my zeal. If you owe me anything, pay it to him, for he deserves it best. He nearly died for you, my sweet girl. No, no, you mustn't hang your head for that, neither. What a fool I am to revive our sorrows! Here we are, the happiest four in England." Then he whispered to her, "Be kind to poor Arthur, that is all I ask. His very life depends on you."

Helen obeyed this order, and went slowly back to Arthur; she sat, cold as ice, on the sofa beside him, and he made love to her. She scarcely heard what he said; she was asking herself how she could end this intolerable interview, and escape her father's looks, who knew the real state of her heart.

At last she rose and went and whispered to him, "My courage has failed me. Have pity on me and get me away. It is the old man; he kills me."

General Rolleston took the hint, and acted with more tact than one would have given him credit for. He got up and rang the bell for tea; then he said to Helen, "You don't drink tea now, and I see you are excited more than is good for you. You had better go to bed."

"Yes, papa," said Helen.

She took her candle, and as she passed young Wardlaw she told him, in a low voice, she would be glad to speak to him alone to-morrow.

"At what hour?" said he, eagerly.

"When you like. At one."

And so she retired, leaving him in ecstasies. This was the first downright assignation she had ever made with him.

They met at one o'clock; he radiant as the sun, and with a rose in his button-hole; she sad and sombre, and with her very skin twitching at the thought of the explanation she had to go through.

He began with amorous commonplaces; she stopped him gravely. "Arthur," said she, "you and I are alone now, and I have a confession to make. Unfortunately, I must cause you pain — terrible pain. Oh! my heart flinches at the wound I am going to give you; but it is my fate, either to wound you or to deceive you."

During this preamble, Arthur sat amazed rather than alarmed. He did not interrupt her, though she paused, and would gladly have been interrupted, since an interruption is an assistance in perplexities.

"Arthur, we suffered great hardships in the boat, and you would have lost me but for one person. He saved my life again and again; I saved his upon the island. My constancy was subject to trials — oh, such trials! So great an example of every manly virtue forever before my eyes! My gratitude and my pity eternally pleading! England and you seemed gone forever. Make excuses for me if you can. Arthur — I — I have formed an attachment."

In making this strange avowal she hung her head and blushed, and the tears ran down her cheeks. But we suspect they ran for *him*, and not for Arthur.

Arthur turned deadly sick at this tremendous blow, dealt with so soft a hand. At last he gasped out, "If you marry him you will bury me."

"No, Arthur," said Helen, gently; "I could not marry him, even if you were to permit me. When you know more, you will see that, of us three unhappy ones, you

are the least unhappy. But, since this is so, am I wrong to tell you the truth, and leave you to decide whether our engagement ought to continue? Of course, what I have owned to you releases you."

"Releases me! But it does not unbind my heart from yours," cried Arthur, in despair.

Then his hysterical nature came out, and he was so near fainting away, that Helen sprinkled water on his temples, and applied eau-de-cologne to his nostrils, and murmured, "Poor, poor Arthur; oh, was I born only to afflict those I esteem?"

He saw her with the tears of pity in her eyes, and he caught her hand, and said, "You were always the soul of honor; keep faith with me, and I will cure you of that unhappy attachment."

"What? do you hold me to my engagement after what I have told you?"

"Cruel Helen! you know I have not the power to hold you."

"I am not cruel; and you have the power. But, oh, think! For your own sake, not mine."

"I have thought; and this attachment to a man you cannot marry is a mere misfortune, yours as well as mine. Give me your esteem until your love comes back, and let our engagement continue."

"It was for you to decide," said Helen, coldly, "and you have decided. There is one condition I must ask you to submit to."

"I submit to it."

"What, before you hear it?"

"Helen, you don't know what a year of misery I have endured, ever since the report came of your death. My happiness is cruelly dashed now; but still it is great happiness by comparison. Make your conditions. You are my queen, as well as my love and my life."

Helen hesitated. It shocked her delicacy to lower the man she had consented to marry.

"Oh, Helen," said Arthur, "anything but secrets between you and me. Go on as you have begun, and let me know the worst at once."

"Can you be very generous, Arthur? generous to him who has caused you so much pain?"

"I'll try," said Arthur, with a groan.

"I would not marry him, unless you gave me up; for I am your betrothed, and you are true to me. I *could* not marry him, even if I were not pledged to you; but it so happens, I can do him one great service without injustice to you; and this service I have vowed to do before I marry. I shall keep that vow, as I keep faith with you. He has been driven from society by a foul slander; that slander I am to sift and confute. It will be long and difficult; but I shall do it; and you could help me if you chose. But that I will not be so cruel as to ask."

Arthur bit his lip with jealous rage; but he was naturally cunning, and his cunning showed him there was at present but one road to Helen's heart. He quelled his torture as well as he could, and resolved to take that road. He reflected a moment, and then he said, —

"If you succeed in that, will you marry me next day?"

"I will, upon my honor."

"Then, I will help you."

"Arthur, think what you say. Women have loved as unselfishly as this; but no man, that ever I heard of."

"No man ever did love a woman as I love you. Yes, I would rather help you, though with a sore heart, than hold aloof from you. What have we to do together?"

"Did I not tell you? To clear his character of a foul stigma, and restore him to England, and to the world which he is so fitted to adorn."

"Yes, yes," said Arthur, "but who is it? Why do I ask, though? He must be a stranger to me."

"No stranger at all," said Helen; "but one who is almost as unjust to you, as the world has been to him;" then, fixing her eyes full on him, she said, "Arthur, it is your old friend and tutor, Robert Penfold."

CHAPTER LII.

Arthur Wardlaw was thunderstruck; and, for some time, sat stupidly staring at her. And to this blank gaze succeeded a look of abject terror, which seemed strange to her, and beyond the occasion. But this was not all; for, after glaring at her with scared eyes and ashy cheeks a moment or two, he got up and literally staggered out of the room without a word.

He had been taken by surprise, and, for once, all his arts had failed him.

Helen, whose eyes had never left his face, and had followed his retiring figure, was frightened at the weight of the blow she had struck; and strange thoughts and conjectures filled her mind. Hitherto, she had felt sure Robert Penfold was under a delusion as to Arthur Wardlaw, and that his suspicions were as unjust as they certainly were vague. Yet, now, at the name of Robert Penfold, Arthur turned pale and fled like a guilty thing. This was a coincidence that confirmed her good opinion of Robert Penfold, and gave her ugly thoughts of Arthur. Still, she was one very slow to condemn a friend, and too generous and candid to condemn on suspicion; so she resolved as far as possible to suspend her unfavorable judgment of Arthur, until she should have asked him why this great emotion, and heard his reply.

Moreover, she was no female detective, but a pure creature bent on clearing innocence. The object of her life was, not to discover the faults of Arthur Wardlaw, or any other person, but to clear Robert Penfold of a crime. Yet Arthur's strange behavior was a great shock

to her; for here, at the very outset, he had somehow made her feel she must hope for no assistance from *him*. She sighed at this check, and asked herself to whom she should apply first for aid. Robert had told her to see his counsel, his solicitor, his father, and Mr. Undercliff, an expert, and to sift the whole matter.

Not knowing exactly where to begin, she thought she would, after all, wait a day or two to give Arthur time to recover himself, and decide calmly whether he would co-operate with her or not.

In this trying interval she set up a diary, for the first time in her life; for she was no egotist: and she noted down what we have just related, only in a very condensed form, and wrote at the margin: *Mysterious.*

Arthur never came near her for two whole days. This looked grave. On the third day she said to General Rolleston:

"Papa, *you* will help me in the good cause, will you not?"

He replied that he would do what he could, but feared that would be little.

"Will you take me down to Elmtrees this morning?"

"With all my heart."

He took her down to Elmtrees. On the way she said: "Papa, you must let me get a word with Mr. Wardlaw, alone."

"Oh, certainly. But of course you will not say a word to hurt his feelings."

"Oh, papa!"

"Excuse me: but, when a person of your age is absorbed with one idea, she sometimes forgets that other people have any feelings at all."

Helen kissed him meekly, and said that was too true; and she would be upon her guard.

To General Rolleston's surprise, his daughter no sooner

saw old Wardlaw than she went — or seemed to go — into high spirits, and was infinitely agreeable.

But, at last, she got him all to herself, and then she turned suddenly grave, and said:

"Mr. Wardlaw, I want to ask you a question. It is something about Robert Penfold."

Wardlaw shook his head. "That is a painful subject, my dear. But what do you wish to know about that unhappy young man?"

"Can you tell me the name of the counsel who defended him at the trial?"

"No, indeed, I cannot."

"But perhaps you can tell me where I could learn that."

"His father is in our office still; no doubt he could tell you."

Now, for obvious reasons, Helen did not like to go to the office; so she asked faintly if there was nobody else who could tell her.

"I suppose the solicitor could."

"But I don't know who was the solicitor," said Helen, with a sigh.

"Hum!" said the merchant. "Try the bill-broker. I'll give you his address;" and he wrote it down for her.

Helen did not like to be too importunate, and she could not bear to let Wardlaw senior know she loved anybody better than his son: and yet some explanation was necessary: so she told him as calmly as she could that her father and herself were both well acquainted with Robert Penfold, and knew many things to his credit.

"I am glad to hear that," said Wardlaw; "and I can believe it. He bore an excellent character here, till, in an evil hour, a strong temptation came, and he fell."

"What! You think he was guilty?"

"I do. Arthur, I believe, has his doubts still. But he is naturally prejudiced in his friend's favor: and, besides, he was not at the trial; I was."

"Thank you, Mr. Wardlaw," said Helen, coldly; and, within five minutes, she was on her way home.

"Arthur prejudiced in Robert Penfold's favor!" That puzzled her extremely.

She put down the whole conversation while her memory was fresh. She added this comment: "What darkness I am groping in!"

Next day she went to the bill-broker, and told him Mr. Wardlaw senior had referred her to him for certain information. Wardlaw's name was evidently a passport. Mr. Adams said obsequiously, "Anything in the world I can do, madam?"

"It is about Mr. Robert Penfold. I wish to know the name of the counsel he had at his trial."

"Robert Penfold! What, the forger?"

"He was accused of that crime," said Helen, turning red.

"Accused, madam! He was convicted. I ought to know; for it was my partner he tried the game on. But I was too sharp for him. I had him arrested before he had time to melt the notes; indicted him, and sent him across the herring pond, in spite of his parson's coat, the rascal."

Helen drew back, as if a serpent had stung her.

"It was you who had him transported!" cried she, turning her eyes on him with horror.

"Of course it was me," said Mr. Adams, firing up; "and I did the country good service. I look upon a forger as worse than a murderer. What is the matter? You are ill."

The poor girl was half-fainting at the sight of the man who had destroyed her Robert, and owned it.

"No, no," she cried, hastily; "let me get away — let me get away from here — you cruel, cruel man."

She tottered to the door, and got to her carriage, she scarcely knew how, without the information she went for.

The bill-broker was no fool; he saw now how the land lay; he followed her down the stairs, and tried to stammer excuses.

"Charing Cross Hotel," said she, faintly, and hid her face against the cushion to avoid the sight of him.

When she got home, she cried bitterly at her feminine weakness and her incapacity; and she entered this pitiable failure in her journal with a severity our male readers will hardly, we think, be disposed to imitate; and she added, by way of comment, — "Is this how I carry out my poor Robert's precept: Be obstinate as a man; be supple as a woman?"

That night she consulted her father on this difficulty, so slight to any but an inexperienced girl. He told her there must be a report of the trial in the newspapers, and the report would probably mention the counsel; she had better consult a file.

Then the thing was, where to find a file. After one or two failures, the British Museum was suggested. She went thither, and could not get in to read without certain formalities. While these were being complied with, she was at a stand-still.

That same evening came a line from Arthur Wardlaw: —

DEAREST HELEN, — I hear from Mr. Adams that you desire to know the name of the counsel who defended Robert Penfold. It was Mr. Tollemache. He has chambers in Lincoln's Inn.

Ever devotedly yours,

ARTHUR WARDLAW.

Helen was touched with this letter, and put it away, indorsed with a few words of gratitude and esteem; and copied it into her diary, and remarked, "This is one more warning not to judge hastily. Arthur's agitation was probably only great emotion at the sudden mention of one, whose innocence he believes, and whose sad fate distresses him." She wrote back and thanked him sweetly, and in terms that encouraged a visit. Next day she went to Mr. Tollemache. A seedy man followed her at a distance. Mr. Tollemache was not at his chambers, not expected till four o'clock. He was in court. She left her card, and wrote on it in pencil that she would call at four.

She went at ten minutes after four. Mr. Tollemache declined through his clerk to see her if she was a client; he could only be approached by her solicitor. She felt inclined to go away and cry; but this time she remembered she was to be obstinate as a man, and supple as a woman. She wrote on a card, "I am not a client of Mr. Tollemache, but a lady deeply interested in obtaining some information, which Mr. Tollemache can with perfect propriety give me. I trust to his courtesy as a gentleman not to refuse me a short interview."

"Admit the lady," said a sharp little voice.

She was ushered in, and found Mr. Tollemache standing before the fire.

"Now, madam, what can I do for you?"

"Some years ago you defended Mr. Robert Penfold; he was accused of forgery."

"Oh, was he? I think I remember something about it. A banker's clerk, wasn't he?"

"Oh, no, sir. A clergyman."

"A clergyman? I remember it perfectly. He was convicted."

"Do you think he was guilty, sir?"

"There was a strong case against him."

"I wish to sift that case."

"Indeed. And you want to go through the papers."

"What papers, sir?"

"The brief for the defence."

"Yes," said Helen, boldly; "would you trust me with that, sir? Oh, if you knew how deeply I am interested!" The tears were in her lovely eyes.

"The brief has gone back to the solicitor, of course. I dare say he will let you read it upon a proper representation."

"Thank you, sir. Will you tell me who is the solicitor, and where he lives?"

"Oh, I can't remember who was the solicitor. That is the very first thing you ought to have ascertained. It was no use coming to me."

"Forgive me for troubling you, sir," said Helen, with a deep sigh.

"Not at all, madam; I am only sorry I cannot be of more service. But do let me advise you to employ your solicitor to make these preliminary inquiries. Happy to consult with him, and re-open the matter, should he discover any fresh evidence." He bowed her out, and sat down to a brief while she was yet in sight.

She turned away heart-sick. The advice she had received was good: but she shrank from baring her heart to her father's solicitor.

She sat disconsolate a while, then ordered another cab, and drove to Wardlaw's office. It was late, and Arthur was gone home; so, indeed, was everybody, except one young subordinate, who was putting up the shutters. "Sir," said she, "can you tell me where old Mr. Penfold lives?"

"Somewhere in the subbubs, miss."

"Yes, sir, but where?"

"I think it is out Pimlico way."

"Could you not give me the street? I would beg you to accept a present if you could."

This sharpened the young gentleman's wits; he went in and groped here and there, till he found the address; and gave it her: No. 3, Fairfield Cottages, Primrose Lane, Pimlico. She gave him a sovereign, to his infinite surprise and delight; and told the cabman to drive to the hotel.

The next moment the man, who had followed her, was chatting familiarly with the subordinate, and helping him put up the shutters.

"I say, Dick," said the youngster, "Penfolds is up in the market; a duchess was here just now, and gave me a sov. to tell her where he lived. Wait a moment till I spit on it for luck."

The agent however did not wait to witness this interesting ceremony. He went back to his hansom round the corner, and drove at once to Arthur Wardlaw's house with the information.

Helen noted down Michael Penfold's address in her diary, and would have gone to him that evening, but she was to dine *tête-à-tête* with her father.

Next day she went down to 3, Fairfield Cottages, at half-past four. On the way her heart palpitated, for this was a very important interview. Here at least she might hope to find some clew, by following out which she would sooner or later establish Robert's innocence. But then came a fearful thought. "Why had not his father done this already, if it was possible to do it? His father must love him. His father must have heard his own story and tested it in every way. Yet his father remained the servant of a firm, the senior partner of which had told her to her face Robert was guilty."

It was a strange and terrible enigma. Yet she clung

to the belief that some new light would come to her from Michael Penfold. Then came bashful fears. "How should she account to Mr. Penfold for the interest she took in his son, she who was affianced to Mr. Penfold's employer?" She arrived at 3, Fairfield Cottages, with her cheeks burning, and repeating to herself, "Now is the time to be supple as a woman; but obstinate as a man."

She sent the cabman in to inquire for Mr. Penfold; a sharp girl of about thirteen came out to her, and told her Mr. Penfold was not at home.

"Can you tell me when he will be at home?"

"No, miss. He have gone to Scotland. A telegraphum came from Wardlaw's last night, as he was to go to Scotland, first thing this morning; and he went at six o'clock."

"Oh, dear! How unfortunate!"

"Who shall I say called, miss?"

"Thank you, I will write. What time did the telegram come?"

"Between five and six last evening, miss."

She returned to the hotel. Fate seemed to be against her. Baffled at the very threshold! At the hotel she found Arthur Wardlaw's card, and a beautiful bouquet.

She sat down directly, and wrote to him affectionately, and asked him in the postscript if he could send her a report of the trial. She received a reply directly, that he had inquired in the office, for one of the clerks had reports of it; but this clerk was unfortunately out, and had locked up his desk.

Helen sighed. Her feet seemed to be clogged at every step in this inquiry.

Next morning, however, a large envelope came for her, and a Mr. Hand wrote to her thus: —

MADAM, — Having been requested by Mr. Arthur Wardlaw to send you my extracts of a trial, the Queen *v.* Penfold, I herewith forward the same, and would feel obliged by your returning them at your convenience.

Your obedient servant,

JAMES HAND.

Helen took the enclosed extracts to her bedroom, and there read them over many times.

In both these reports the case for the Crown was neat, clear, cogent, straightforward, and supported by evidence. The defence was chiefly argument of counsel to prove the improbability of a clergyman and a man of good character passing a forged note. One of the reports stated that Mr. Arthur Wardlaw, a son of the principal witness, had taken the accusation so much to heart that he was now dangerously ill at Oxford. The other report did not contain this, but, on the other hand, it stated that the prisoner after conviction had endeavored to lay the blame on Mr. Arthur Wardlaw, but that the judge had stopped him, and said he could only aggravate his offence by endeavoring to cast a slur upon the Wardlaws, who had both shown a manifest desire to shield him, but were powerless for want of evidence.

In both reports the summing up of the judge was moderate in expression, but leaned against the prisoner on every point, and corrected the sophistical reasoning of his counsel very sensibly. Both the reports said an expert was called for the prisoner, whose ingenuity made the court smile, but did not counterbalance the evidence. Helen sat cold as ice with the extracts in her hand.

Not that her sublime faith was shaken. But that poor Robert appeared to have been so calmly and fairly dealt with by everybody. Even Mr. Hennessy, the counsel for the Crown, had opened the case with humane regret, and confined himself to facts, and said nobody would be

more pleased than he would, if this evidence could be contradicted, or explained in a manner consistent with the prisoner's innocence.

What a stone she had undertaken to roll — up what a hill!

What was to be her next step? Go to the Museum, which was now open to her, and read more reports? She shrank from that.

"The newspapers are all against him," said she; "and I don't want to be told he is guilty, when I know he is innocent."

She now re-examined the extracts with a view to names, and found the only names mentioned were those of the counsel. The expert's name was not given in either. However, she knew that from Robert. She resolved to speak to Mr. Hennessy first, and try and get at the defendant's solicitor through him.

She found him out by the Law Directory, and called at a few minutes past four.

Hennessy was almost the opposite to Tollemache. He was about the size of a gentleman's wardrobe; and, like most enormous men, good-natured. He received her, saw with his practised eye that she was no common person, and, after a slight hesitation on professional grounds, heard her request. He sent for his note-book, found the case in one moment, re-mastered it in another, and told her the solicitor for the Crown in that case was Freshfield.

"Now," said he, "you want to know who was the defendant's solicitor? Jenkins, a stamped envelope. Write your name and address on that."

While she was doing it, he scratched a line to Mr. Freshfield, asking him to send the required information to the enclosed address.

She thanked Mr. Hennessy with the tears in her eyes.

"I dare not ask you whether you think him guilty," she said.

Hennessy shook his head with an air of good-natured rebuke.

"You must not cross-examine counsel," said he; "but, if it will be any comfort to you, I'll say this much, there was just a shadow of doubt, and Tollemache certainly let a chance slip. If I had defended your friend, I would have insisted on a postponement of the trial, until this Arthur Wardlaw" (looking at his note-book) "could be examined, either in court or otherwise, if he was really dying. Is he dead, do you know?"

"No."

"I thought not. Sick witnesses are often at death's door; but I never knew one pass the threshold. Ha! ha! The trial ought to have been postponed till he got well. If a judge refused me a postponement in such a case, I would make him so odious to the jury, that the prisoner would get a verdict in spite of his teeth."

"Then, you think he was badly defended?"

"No; that is saying a great deal more than I could justify. But there are counsel, who trust too much to their powers of reasoning, and underrate a chink in the evidence pro or con. Practice, and a few black-falls, cure them of that."

Mr. Hennessy uttered this general observation with a certain change of tone, which showed he thought he had said as much or more than his visitor had any right to expect from him; and she, therefore, left him, repeating her thanks. She went home, pondering on every word he had said, and entered it all in her journal, with the remark, "How strange! the first doubt of Robert's guilt comes to me from the lawyer who caused him to be found guilty. He calls it the shadow of a doubt."

That very evening, Mr. Freshfield had the courtesy to

send her by messenger the name and address of the solicitor who had defended Robert Penfold. Lovejoy and James, Lincoln's Inn Fields. She called on them, and sent in her card. She was kept waiting a long time in the outer office, and felt ashamed, and sick at heart, seated among young clerks. At last she was admitted, and told Mr. Lovejoy she and her father, General Rolleston, were much interested in a late client of his, Mr. Robert Penfold, and would he be kind enough to let her see the brief for the defence ?

"Are you a relation of the Penfolds, madam ?"

"No, sir," said Helen, blushing.

"Humph !" said Lovejoy.

He touched a hand-bell. A clerk appeared.

"Ask Mr. Upton to come to me."

Mr. Upton, the managing clerk, came in due course, and Mr. Lovejoy asked him, —

"Who instructed us in the Queen *v.* Penfold ?"

"It was Mr. Michael Penfold, sir."

Mr. Lovejoy then told Helen that she must just get a line from Mr. Michael Penfold, and then the papers should be submitted to her.

"Yes; but, sir," said Helen, "Mr. Penfold is in Scotland."

"Well, but you can write to him."

"No; I don't know in what part of Scotland he is."

"Then you are not very intimate with him ?"

"No, sir; my acquaintance is with Mr. Robert Penfold."

"Have you a line from *him ?*"

"I have no *written* authority from him; but will you not take my word that I act by his desire ?"

"My dear madam," said the lawyer, "we go by rule. There are certain forms to be observed in these things. I am sure your own good sense will tell you it would be cruel and improper of me to submit those papers with-

out an order from Robert or Michael Penfold. Pray consider this as a delay, not a refusal."

"Yes, sir," said Helen; "but I meet with nothing but delays, and my heart is breaking under them."

The solicitor looked sorry, but would not act irregularly. She went home sighing, and condemned to wait the return of Michael Penfold.

The cab-door was opened for her by a seedy man she fancied she had seen before.

Baffled thus, and crippled in every movement she made, however slight, in favor of Robert Penfold, she was seduced on the other hand into all the innocent pleasures of the town. Her adventure had transpired somehow or other, and all General Rolleston's acquaintances hunted him up: and both father and daughter were courted by people of ton as lions. A shipwrecked beauty is not offered to society every day. Even her own sex raved about her, and about the chain of beautiful pearls she had picked up somehow on her desolate island. She always wore them; they linked her to that sacred purpose she seemed to be forgetting. Her father drew her with him into the vortex, hiding from her that he embarked in it principally for her sake, and she went down the current with him out of filial duty. Thus unfathomable difficulties thrust her back from her uphill task: and the world, with soft but powerful hand, drew her away to it. Arthur brought her a choice bouquet, or sent her a choice bouquet, every evening, but otherwise did not intrude much upon her; and though she was sure he would assist her, if she asked him, gratitude and delicacy forbade her to call him again to her assistance. She preferred to await the return of Michael Penfold. She had written to him at the office to tell him she had news of his son, and begged him to give her instant notice of his return from Scotland.

Day after day passed, and he did not write to her. She began to chafe, and then to pine. Her father saw, and came to a conclusion that her marriage with Arthur ought to be hastened. He resolved to act quietly but firmly towards that end.

CHAPTER LIII.

Up to this time Helen's sex, and its attributes, had been a great disadvantage to her. She had been stopped on the very threshold of her inquiry by petty difficulties, which a man would have soon surmounted. But one fine day the scale gave a little turn, and she made a little discovery, thanks to her sex. Women, whether it is that they are born to be followed, or are accustomed to be followed, seem to have eyes in the backs of their heads, and instinct to divine when somebody is after them. This inexperienced girl, who had missed seeing many things our readers have seen, observed in merely passing her window a seedy man in the court-yard of the hotel. Would you believe it, she instantly recognized the man who had opened her cab-door for her in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Quick as lightning it passed through her mind, "Why do I see the same figure in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and at Charing Cross?" At various intervals she passed the window; and twice she saw the man again. She pondered, and determined to try a little experiment. Robert Penfold, it may be remembered, had mentioned an expert as one of the persons she was to see. She had looked for his name in the Directory; but experts were not down in the book. Another fatality! But at last she had found Undercliff, a lithographer, and she fancied that he must be the same person. She did not hope to learn much from him; the newspapers said his evidence had caused a smile. She had a distinct object in visiting him, the nature of which will appear. She ordered a cab and dressed herself. She came down and entered

the cab; but instead of telling the man where to drive, she gave him a slip of paper, containing the address of the lithographer. "Drive there," said she, a little mysteriously. The cabman winked, suspecting an intrigue, and went off to the place. There she learned that Mr. Undercliff had moved to Frith Street, Soho, number not known. She told the cabman to drive slowly up and down the street, but could not find the name. At last she observed some lithographs in a window. She let the cabman go all down the street, then stopped him and paid him off. She had no sooner done this than she walked very briskly back and entered the little shop, and inquired for Mr. Undercliff. He was out, and not expected back for an hour. "I will wait," said Helen; and she sat down with her head upon her white hand. A seedy man passed the window rapidly with a busy air; and if his eye shot a glance into the shop, it was so slight and careless that nobody could suspect he was a spy, and had done his work effectually as he flashed by. In that moment the young lady, through the chink of her fingers, which she had opened for that purpose, not only recognized the man, but noticed his face, his hat, his waistcoat, his dirty linen, and the pin in his neck-tie.

"Ah!" said she, and flushed to the brow.

She lifted up her head and became conscious of a formidable old woman, who was standing behind the counter at a side door, eying her with the severest scrutiny. This old woman was tall and thin, and had a fine face, the lower part of which was feminine enough; but the forehead and brows were alarming. Though her hair was silvery, the brows were black and shaggy, and the forehead was divided by a vertical furrow into two temples. Under those shaggy eyebrows shone dark gray eyes that passed for black with most people; and those eyes were fixed on Helen, reading her. Helen's light

hazel eyes returned their gaze. She blushed, and still looking, said, "Pray, madam, can I see Mr. Undercliff?"

"My son is out for the day, miss," said the old lady, civilly.

"Oh, dear! how unfortunate I am," said Helen, with a sigh.

"He comes back to-night. You can see him to-morrow at ten o'clock. A question of handwriting?"

"Not exactly," said Helen; "but he was witness in favor of a person, I know was innocent."

"But he was found guilty," said the other, with cool keenness.

"Yes, madam: and he has no friend to clear him, but me; a poor weak girl, baffled and defeated whichever way I turn." She began to cry.

The old woman looked at her crying, with that steady composure which marks her sex on these occasions, and, when she was better, said quietly, "You are not so weak as you think." She added after a while, "If you wish to retain my son, you had better leave a fee."

"With pleasure, madam. What is the fee?"

"One guinea. Of course there is a separate charge for any work he may do for you."

"That is but reasonable, madam." And with this she paid the fee, and rose to go.

"Shall I send any one home with you?"

"No, thank you," said Helen. "Why?"

"Because you are followed, and because you are not used to be followed."

"Why, how did you find that out?"

"By your face, when a man passed the window — a shabby-genteel fellow. He was employed by some gentleman, no doubt. Such faces as yours will be followed in London. If you feel uneasy, miss, I will put on my bonnet, and see you home."

Helen was surprised at this act of substantial civility from the Gorgon. "Oh, thank you, Mrs. Undercliff," said she. "No, I am not the least afraid. Let them follow me; I am doing nothing that I am ashamed of. Indeed, I am glad I am thought worth the trouble of following. It shows me I am not so thoroughly contemptible. Good-by! and many thanks. Ten o'clock to-morrow."

And she walked home without looking once behind her till the hotel was in sight; then she stopped at a shop-window, and in a moment her swift eye embraced the whole landscape. But the shabby-genteel man was nowhere in sight.

CHAPTER LIV.

When Joseph Wylie disappeared from the scene, Nancy Rouse made a discovery, which very often follows the dismissal of a suitor: that she was considerably more attached to him than she had thought. The house became dull; the subordinate washerwomen languid: their taciturnity irritated and depressed Nancy by turns.

In the midst of this, Michael Penfold discovered that Helen had come back safe. He came into Nancy's parlor, beaming with satisfaction, and told her of the good news. It gave her immense delight at first. But, when she had got used to her joy on that score, she began to think she had used Joe Wylie very ill. Now that Helen was saved, she could no longer realize that Wylie was so very much to blame.

She even persuaded herself that his disappearance was the act of a justly offended man; and, as he belonged to a class of whose good-sense she had a poor opinion, she was tormented with fears that he would do some desperate act, — drown himself, or go to sea; or, worst of all, marry some trollop. She became very anxious and unhappy. Before this misfortune, she used to go about singing the first verse of a song, and whistling the next, like any ploughboy, — an eccentric performance, but it made the house gay. Now, both song and whistle were suspended; and, instead, it was all hard work and hard crying, turn about.

She attached herself to Michael Penfold, because he had known trouble, and was sympathetic; and these two

opened their hearts to one another, and formed a friendship that was very honest and touching.

The scene of their conversation and mutual consolalation was Nancy's parlor, — a little mite of a room she had partitioned off from her business. "For," said she, "a lady I'll be — after my work is done — if it is only in a cupboard." The room had a remarkably large fireplace, which had originally warmed the whole floor; but now was used as a ventilator only. The gas would have been stifling without it. As for lighting a fire in it, that was out of the question.

On a certain evening, soon after Mr. Penfold's return from Scotland, the pair sat over their tea, and the conversation fell on the missing sweetheart. Michael had been thinking it over, and was full of encouragement. He said, —

"Miss Rouse, something tells me that if poor Mr. Wylie could only know your heart, he would turn up again directly. What we ought to do is to send somebody to look for him in all the sailors' haunts: some sharp fellow — dear me, what a knocking they keep up next door!"

"Oh, that is always the way when one wants a quiet chat! Drat the woman! I'll have her indicted."

"No, you won't, Miss Rouse; she is a poor soul, and has got no business, except letting lodgings. She is not like you. But I do hope she will be so considerate as not to come quite through the wall."

"Dear heart," said Nancy, "go on, and never mind her noise, which it is worse than a horgan-grinder."

"Well, then, if you can't find him that way, I say — advertise."

"Me!" cried Nancy, turning very red. "Do I look like a woman as would advertise for a man?"

"No, ma'am: quite the reverse. But what I mean is,

you might put in something not too plain. For instance: If J. W. will return to N. R., all will be forgotten and forgiven."

"He'd have the upper hand of me for life," said Nancy. "No, no; I won't advertise for the fool. What right had he to run off at the first word? He ought to know my bark is worse than my bite by this time. You can, though."

"Me bite, ma'am?" said the old gentleman.

"Bite? No; advertise, since you're so fond of it. Come, you sit down, and write one; and I'll pay for it, for that matter."

Michael sat down, and drew up the following: "If Mr. Joseph Wylie will call on Michael Penfold, at No. 3, F. C., he will hear of something to his advantage."

"To his advantage?" said Nancy, doubtfully. "Why not tell him the truth?"

"Why, that is the truth, ma'am. Isn't it to his advantage to be reconciled to an honest, virtuous, painstaking lady, that honors him with her affection, and me with her friendship? Besides, it is the common form; and there is nothing like sticking to form."

"Mr. Penfolds," said Nancy, "any one can see you was born a gentleman; and I am a deal prouder to have you, and your dirty linen, as I should him as pays you your wages: pale eyes, pale hair, pale eyelashes. I wouldn't trust him to mangle a duster."

"Oh, Miss Rouse! pray don't disparage my good master to me."

"I can't help it, sir: thought is free, especially in this here compartment. Better speak one's mind than die o' the sulks. So, shut your ear, when my music jars. But one every other day is enough. If he won't come back for that, why, he must go, and I must look out for another. There's as good fish in the sea as ever came

out of it. Still, I'll not deny I have a great respect for poor Joe. O Mr. Penfold! what shall I do? Oh! oh! oh!"

"There, there," said Michael, "I'll put this into the *Times* every day."

"You are a good soul, Mr. Penfolds. Oh! oh! oh!"

When he had finished the advertisement, in a clerkly hand, and she had finished her cry, she felt comparatively comfortable, and favored Mr. Penfold with some reflections.

"Dear heart, Mr. Penfolds, how you and I do take to one another, to be sure. But so we ought; for we are honest folk, the pair, and has had a hard time. Don't it never strike you rather curious that two thousand pounds was at the bottom of both our troubles, yourn and mine? I might have married Joe, and been a happy woman with him; but the devil puts in my head — There you go again, hammering! Life ain't worth having, next door to that lodging-house. Drat the woman! if she must peck, why don't she go in the churchyard, and peck her own grave, which we shall never be quiet till she *is* there; and these here gimcrack houses they won't stand no more pecking at than a soapsud. Ay, that's what hurts me, Mr. Penfold: the Lord had given him and me health and strength and honesty. Our betters had wed for love, and wrought for money, as the saying is; but I must go again nature, that cried, 'Come couple,' and must bargain for two thousand pounds. So, now I've lost the man, and not got the money, nor never shall; and, if I had, I'd burn — Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah!"

This tirade ended in stifled screams of terror, caused by the sudden appearance of a human hand, in a place and in a manner well adapted to shake the stoutest laundress's nerves.

This hand came through the brick-work of the chimney-piece, and there remained a moment or two; then slowly retired, and, as it retired, something was heard to fall upon the shavings and tinsel of the fireplace.

Nancy, by a feminine impulse, put her hands before her face to hide this supernatural hand; and, when she found courage to withdraw them, and glare at the place, there was no aperture whatever in the brick-work, and, consequently, the hand appeared to have traversed the solid material, both coming and going.

"O Mr. Penfolds," cried Nancy, "I'm a sinful woman; this comes of talking of the devil arter sunset," and she sat trembling so that the very floor shook.

Mr. Penfold's nerves were not strong. He and Nancy both huddled together for mutual protection, and their faces had not a vestige of color left in them.

However, after a period of general paralysis, Penfold whispered, —

"I heard it drop something on the shavings."

"Then we shall be all in a blaze o' brimstone," shrieked Nancy, wringing her hands.

And they waited to see.

Then, as no conflagration took place, Mr. Penfold got up, and said he must go and see what it was the hand had dropped.

Nancy, in whom curiosity was beginning to battle with terror, let him go to the fireplace without a word of objection, and then cried out, —

"Don't go anigh it, sir; it will do you a mischief; don't touch it whatever. *Take the tongs.*"

He took the tongs, and presently flung into the middle of the room a small oilskin packet. This, as it lay on the ground, they both eyed like two deer glowering at a piece of red cloth, and ready to leap back again over the moon if it should show signs of biting. But oilskin is

not preternatural, nor has tradition connected it, however remotely, with the Enemy of man.

Consequently, a great revulsion took place in Nancy, and she passed from fear to indignation at having been frightened so.

She ran to the fireplace, and, putting her head up the chimney, screamed, "Heave your dirt where you heave your love, ye Brazen."

While she objurgated her neighbor, whom, with feminine justice, she held responsible for every act done in her house, Penfold undid the packet, and Nancy returned to her seat, with her mind more at ease, to examine the contents.

"Banknotes!" cried Penfold.

"Ay," said Nancy incredulously, "they do look like banknotes, and feel like 'em; but they ain't wrote like them. Banknotes ain't wrote black like that in the left-hand corner."

Penfold explained.

"Ten-pound notes are not, nor fives; but large notes are. These are all fifties."

"Fifty whats?"

"Fifty pounds."

"What, each of them bits of paper worth fifty pounds?"

"Yes. Let us count them; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, — oh, Lord! — 40. Why, it is two thousand pounds — just two thousand pounds. It is the very sum that ruined me; it did not belong to me, and its being in the house ruined my poor Robert. And this does not belong to you. Lock all the doors, bar all the windows, and burn them before the police come."

"Wait a bit," said Nancy, "wait a bit."

They sat on each side of the notes; Penfold agitated and terrified, Nancy confounded and perplexed.

CHAPTER LV.

PUNCTUALLY at ten o'clock, Helen returned to Frith Street, and found Mr. Undercliff behind a sort of counter, employed in tracing; a workman was seated at some little distance from him, both bent on their work.

"Mr. Undercliff?" said Helen.

He rose and turned towards her politely; a pale, fair man, with a keen gray eye, and a pleasant voice and manner: "I am Edward Undercliff. You come by appointment?"

"Yes, sir."

"A question of handwriting?"

"Not entirely, sir. Do you remember giving witness in favor of a young clergyman, Mr. Robert Penfold, who was accused of forgery?"

"I remember the circumstance, but not the details."

"Oh, dear, that is unfortunate," said Helen, with a deep sigh; she often had to sigh now.

"Why, you see," said the expert, "I am called on such a multitude of trials. However, I take notes of the principal ones. What year was it in?"

"In 1864."

Mr. Undercliff went to a set of drawers arranged chronologically, and found his notes directly. "It was a forged bill, madam, indorsed and presented by Penfold. I was called to prove that the bill was not in the handwriting of Penfold. Here is my facsimile of the Robert Penfold indorsed upon the bill by the prisoner." He handed it to her, and she examined it with interest. "And here are facsimiles of genuine

writing by John Wardlaw, and here is a copy of the forged note."

He laid it on the table before her. She started, and eyed it with horror. It was a long time before she could speak. At length she said, "And that wicked piece of paper destroyed Robert Penfold."

"Not that piece of paper, but the original; this is a facsimile, so far as the writing is concerned. It was not necessary in this case to imitate paper and color. Stay, here is a sheet on which I have lithographed the three styles, that will enable you to follow my comparison. But perhaps that would not interest you?" Helen had the tact to say it would. Thus encouraged, the expert showed her that Robert Penfold's writing had nothing in common with the forged note. He added, "I also detected in the forged note habits which were entirely absent from the true writing of John Wardlaw. You will understand there were plenty of undoubted specimens in court to go by."

"Then, oh, sir," said Helen, "Robert Penfold was not guilty."

"Certainly not of writing the forged note. I swore that, and I'll swear it again. But, when it came to questions, whether he had passed the note, and whether he knew it was forged, that was quite out of my province."

"I can understand that," said Helen; "but you heard the trial; you are very intelligent, sir; you must have formed some opinion as to whether he was guilty or not."

The expert shook his head. "Madam," said he, "mine is a profound and difficult art, which aims at certainties. Very early in my career I found that to master that art I must be single-minded, and not allow my ear to influence my eye. By purposely avoiding all reasoning from external circumstances, I have distanced my competitors in expertise; but I sometimes think I have rather weakened

my powers of conjecture through disuse. Now, if my mother had been at the trial, she would give you an opinion of some value on the outside facts. But that is not my line. If you feel sure he was innocent, and want *me* to aid you, you must get hold of the handwriting of every person who was likely to know old Wardlaw's handwriting, and so might have imitated it; all the clerks in his office, to begin with. Nail the forger, that is your only chance."

"What, sir!" said Helen, with surprise, "if you saw the true handwriting of the person who wrote that forged note, should you recognize it?"

"Why not? It is difficult; but I have done it hundreds of times."

"Oh, is forgery so common?"

"No: but I am in all the cases; and, besides, I do a great deal in a business that requires the same sort of expertise — anonymous letters. I detect assassins of that kind by the score. A gentleman or lady, down in the country, gets a poisoned arrow by the post, or perhaps a shower of them. They are always in disguised handwriting; those who receive them, send them up to me, with writings of all the people they suspect. The disguise is generally more or less superficial; five or six unconscious habits remain below it, and often these undisguised habits are the true characteristics of the writer. And I'll tell you something curious, madam; it is quite common for all the suspected people to be innocent; and then I write back, 'Send me the handwriting of the people you suspect *the least*;' and amongst them I often find the assassin."

"Oh, Mr. Undercliff," said Helen, "you make my heart sick."

"It is a vile world, for that matter," said the expert; "and the country no better than the town, for all it looks

so sweet with its green fields and purling rills. There they sow anonymous letters like barley; the very girls write anonymous letters, that make my hair stand on end. Yes, it is a vile world."

"Don't you believe him, miss," said Mrs. Undercliff, appearing suddenly. Then, turning to her son, "How can you measure the world? You live in a little one of your own; a world of forgers and anonymous writers; you see so many of these, you fancy they are common as dirt; but they are only common to you, because they all come your way."

"Oh, that is it, is it?" said the expert, doubtfully.

"Yes, that is it, Ned," said the old lady, quietly; then after a pause, she said, "I want you to do your very best for this young lady."

"I always do," said the artist. "But how can I judge without materials? And she brings me none."

Mrs. Undercliff turned to Helen, and said, "Have you brought him nothing at all, no handwritings — in your bag?"

Then Helen sighed again. "I have no handwriting except Mr. Penfold's; but I have two printed reports of the trial."

"Printed reports," said the expert; "they are of no use to me. Ah! here is an outline I took of the prisoner during the trial. You can read faces: tell the lady whether he is guilty or not;" and he handed the profile to his mother with an ironical look; not that he doubted her proficiency in the rival art of reading faces, but that he doubted the existence of the art.

Mrs. Undercliff took the profile, and coloring slightly, said to Miss Rolleston, "It is living faces I profess to read: there I can see the movement of the eyes and other things, that my son, here, has not studied." Then she scrutinized the profile. "It is a very handsome face," said she.

The expert chuckled. "There's a woman's judgment," said he. "Handsome! the fellow I got transported for life down at Exeter was an Adonis, and forged wills, bonds, and powers of attorney by the dozen."

"There's something noble about this face," said Mrs. Undercliff, ignoring the interruption; "and yet something simple. I think him more likely to be a cats-paw than a felon." Having delivered this with a certain modest dignity, she laid the profile on the counter before Helen.

The expert had a wonderful eye and hand; it was a good thing for society he had elected to be gamekeeper, instead of poacher; detector of forgery, instead of forger. No photograph was ever truer than this outline. Helen started, and bowed her head over the sketch to conceal the strong and various emotions that swelled at the sight of the portrait of her martyr. In vain; if the eyes were hidden, the tender bosom heaved, the graceful body quivered, and the tears fell fast upon the counter.

Mrs. Undercliff was womanly enough, though she looked like the late Lord Thurlow in petticoats; and she instantly aided the girl to hide her beating heart from the man, though that man was her son. She distracted his attention. "Give me all your notes, Ned," said she, "and let me see whether I can make something of them; but first, perhaps, Miss Rolleston will empty her bag on the counter. Go back to your work a moment, for I know you have enough to do."

The expert was secretly glad to be released from a case in which there were no materials; and so Helen escaped unobserved except by one of her own sex. She saw directly what Mrs. Undercliff had done for her, and lifted her sweet eyes, thick with tears, to thank her. Mrs. Undercliff smiled maternally, and next these two ladies did a stroke of business in the twinkling of an

eye, and without a word spoken; whereof anon. Helen being once more composed, Mrs. Undercliff took up the prayer-book, and asked her with some curiosity what could be in that.

"Oh," said Helen, "only some writing of Mr. Penfold. Mr. Undercliff does not want to see that; he is already sure Robert Penfold never wrote that wicked thing."

"Yes, but I should like to see some more of his handwriting for all that," said the expert, looking suddenly up.

"But it is only in pencil."

"Never mind; you need not fear I shall alter my opinion."

Helen colored high. "You are right; and I should disgrace my good cause by withholding anything from inspection. There, sir." And she opened the prayer-book and laid Cooper's dying words before the expert; he glanced over them with an eye like a bird, and compared them with his notes.

"Yes," said he, "that is Robert Penfold's writing; and I say again, that hand never wrote the forged note."

"Let me see that," said Mrs. Undercliff.

"Oh, yes," said Helen, rather irresolutely, "but you look into the things as well as the writing, and I promised papa" —

"Can't you trust me?" said Mrs. Undercliff, turning suddenly cold and a little suspicious.

"Oh, yes, madam: and indeed I have nothing to reproach myself with. But my papa is anxious — However, I am sure you are my friend; and all I ask is that you will never mention to a soul what you read there."

"I promise that," said the elder lady, and instantly bent her black brows upon the writing. And, as she did

so, Helen observed her countenance rise, as a face is very apt to do when its owner enters on congenial work.

"You would have made a great mistake to keep this from *me*," said she, gravely. Then she pondered profoundly; then she turned to her son and said, "Why, Edward, this is the very young lady who was wrecked in the Pacific Ocean, and cast on a desolate island. We have all read about you in the papers, miss: and I felt for you, for one, but, of course, not as I do now I have seen you. You must let me go into this with you."

"Ah, if you would," said Helen. "Oh, madam, I have gone through tortures already for want of somebody of my own sex to keep me in countenance. Oh, if you could have seen how I have been received! with what cold looks, and sometimes with impertinent stares before I could even penetrate into the region of those cold looks, and petty formalities. Any miserable straw was excuse enough to stop me on my errand of justice, and mercy, and gratitude."

"Gratitude?"

"Oh, yes, madam. The papers have only told you that I was shipwrecked and cast away. They don't tell you that Robert Penfold warned me the ship was to be destroyed, and I disbelieved and affronted him in return, and he never reproached me, not even by a look. And we were in a boat with the sailors, all starved — not hungry: starved — and mad with thirst, and yet in his own agony he hid something for me to eat. All his thought, all his fear, was for me. Such things are not done in those great extremities of the poor, vulgar, suffering body, except by angels in whom the soul rises above the flesh. And he is such an angel. I have had a knife lifted over me to kill me, madam, — yes: and again it was he who saved me. I owe my life to him on the island over and over again; and in return I have

promised to give him back his honor, that he values far more than life, as all such noble spirits do. Ah, my poor martyr, how feebly I plead your cause. Oh, help me! pray, pray, help me! All is so dark, and I so weak, so weak." Again the loving eyes streamed; and this time not an eye was dry in the little shop.

The expert flung down his tracing with something between a groan and a curse. "Who can do that drudgery," he cried, "whilst the poor young lady — Mother, you take it in hand; find me some material, though it is no bigger than a fly's foot, give me but a clew no thicker than a spider's web, and I'll follow it through the whole labyrinth. But you see I'm impotent; there's no basis for me. It is a case for you. It wants a shrewd sagacious body that can read facts and faces; and — I won't jest any more, Miss Rolleston, for you are deeply in earnest. Well, then, she really is a woman with a wonderful insight into facts and faces. She has got a way of reading them as I read handwriting; and she must have taken a great fancy to you, for as a rule she never does us the honor to meddle."

"Have you taken a fancy to me, madam?" said Helen, modestly and tenderly, yet half archly.

"That I have," said the other. "Those eyes of yours went straight into my heart last night, or I should not be here this morning. That is partly owing to my own eyes being so dark, and yours the loveliest hazel. It is twenty years since eyes like yours have gazed into mine. Diamonds are not half so rare, nor a tenth part so lovely, to my fancy."

She turned her head away, melted, probably, by some tender reminiscence. It was only for a moment. She turned round again, and said, quietly, "Yes, Ned, I should like to try what I can do; I think you said these are reports of his trial. I'll begin by reading them."

She read them both very slowly and carefully, and her face grew like a judge's, and Helen watched each shade of expression with deep anxiety.

That powerful countenance showed alacrity and hope at first; then doubt and difficulty, and at last dejection. Helen's heart turned cold, and for the first time she began to despair. For now, a shrewd person with a plain prejudice in her favor and Robert's, was staggered by the simple facts of the trial.

CHAPTER LVI.

Mrs. Undercliff, having read the reports, avoided Helen's eye — (another bad sign). She turned to Mr. Undercliff, and probably because the perusal of the reports had disappointed her, said, almost angrily, "Edward, what did you say to make them laugh at that trial? Both these papers say that 'an expert was called, whose ingenuity made the court smile, but did not counterbalance the evidence.'"

"Why, that is a falsehood on the face of it," said the expert, turning red. "I was called simply and solely to prove Penfold did not write the forged note! I proved it to the judge's satisfaction, and he directed the prisoner to be acquitted on that count. Miss Rolleston, the lawyers often do sneer at experts; but then, four experts out of five are rank impostors; a set of theorists, who go by arbitrary rules framed in the closet, and not by large and laborious comparison with indisputable documents. These charlatans are not aware that five thousand cramped and tremulous, but genuine, signatures are written every day by honest men, and so they denounce every cramped or tremulous writing as a forgery. The varieties in a man's writing, caused by his writing with his glove on, or off, with a quill, or a bad steel pen, drunk or sober, calm or agitated, in full daylight or dusk, etc., etc., all this is a dead letter to them, and they have a bias towards suspicion of forgery; and a banker's clerk, with his mere general impression, is better evidence than they are. But I am an artist of a very different stamp. I never reason *à priori*. I compare, and

I have no bias. I never will have. The judges know this, and the pains and labor I take to be right, and they treat me with courtesy. At Penfold's trial the matter was easy; I showed the court he had not written the note, and my evidence crushed the indictment so far. How could they have laughed at my testimony? Why, they acted upon it. Those reports are not worth a straw. What journals were they cut out of?"

"I don't know," said Helen.

"Is there nothing on the upper margin to show?"

"No."

"What, not on either of them?"

"No."

"Show them me, please. This is a respectable paper, too; the *Daily News*."

"Oh, Mr. Undercliff, how can you know that?"

"I don't *know* it; but I think so, because the type and paper are like that journal; the conductors are fond of clean type; so am I. Why, here is another misstatement; the judge never said he aggravated his offence by trying to cast a slur upon the Wardlaws. I'll swear the judge never said a syllable of the kind. What he said was, 'you can speak in arrest of judgment on grounds of law, but you must not impugn the verdict with facts.' That was the only time he spoke to the prisoner at all. These reports are not worth a button."

Helen lifted up her hands and eyes in despair. "Where shall I find the truth?" said she. "The world is a quicksand."

"My dear young lady," said Mrs. Undercliff, "don't you be discouraged; there must be a correct report in some paper or other."

"I am not so sure of that," said Undercliff. "I believe the reporters trundle off to the nearest public house together, and light their pipes with their notes, and

settle something or other by memory. Indeed, they have reached a pitch of inaccuracy that could not be attained without co-operation. Independent liars contradict each other; but these chaps follow one another in falsehood, like geese toddling after one another across a common."

"Come, come," said Mrs. Undercliff, "if you can't help us, don't hurt us. We don't want a man to talk yellow jaundice to us. Miss Rolleston must employ somebody to read all the other papers, and compare the reports with these."

"I'll employ nobody but myself," said Helen. "I'll go to the British Museum, directly."

"The Museum!" cried Mr. Undercliff, looking up with surprise. "Why, they will be half an hour groping for a copy of the *Times*. No, no; go to Peele's Coffee House." He directed her where to find that place; and she was so eager to do something for Robert, however small, that she took up her bag, directly, and put up the prayer-book, and was going to ask for her extracts, when she observed Mr. Undercliff was scrutinizing them with great interest, so she thought she would leave them with him; but, on looking more closely, she found that he was examining, not the reports, but the advertisements and miscellanea on the reverse side.

She waited out of politeness, but she colored, and bit her lip. She could not help feeling hurt and indignant. "Any trash is more interesting to people than poor Robert's case," she thought. And, at last, she said, bitterly, —

"Those *advertisements* seem to interest you, sir; shall I leave *them* with you?"

"If you please," said the expert, over whose head, bent in dogged scrutiny, this small thunderbolt of feminine wrath passed unconscious.

Helen drove away to Peele's Coffee House.

Mrs. Undercliff pondered over the facts that had been elicited in this conversation; the expert remained absorbed in the advertisements at the back of Helen's reports.

When he had examined every one of them, minutely, he held the entire extracts up to the light, and looked through them; then he stuck a double magnifier in his eye, and looked through them with that. Then he took two pieces of card, wrote on them Re Penfold, and looked about for his other materials, to put them all neatly together. Lo! the profile of Robert Penfold was gone.

"Now that is too bad," said he. "So much for her dovelike eyes, that you admired so. Miss Innocence has stolen that profile."

"Stolen! she bought it—of me."

"Why, she never said a word."

"No; but she looked a look. She asked me with those sweet, imploring eyes, might she have it; and I looked yes; then she glanced towards you, and put down a note. Here it is."

"Why, you beat the telegraph, you two. Ten pounds for that thing! I must make it up to her, somehow."

"I wish you could. Poor girl, she is a lady every inch. But she is in love with that Penfold. I am afraid it is a hopeless case."

"I have seen a plainer. But hopeless it is not. However, you work your way, and I'll work mine."

"But you can't; you have no materials."

"No; but I have found a door that may lead to materials."

Having delivered himself thus mysteriously, he shut himself up in obstinate silence, until Helen Rolleston called again, two days afterwards. She brought a bag

full of manuscript this time; to wit, copies in her own handwriting of eight reports, the Queen *v.* Penfold. She was in good spirits, and told Mrs. Undercliff that all the reports were somewhat more favorable than the two she had left; and she was beginning to tell Mr. Undercliff he was quite right in his recollection, when he interrupted her and said, "All that is secondary now. Have you any objection to answer me a question?"

She colored; but said, "Oh, no. Ask me anything you like;" then she blushed deeper.

"How did you become possessed of those two reports you left with me the other day?"

At this question, so different from what she feared, Helen cleared up and smiled, and said, "From a Mr. Hand, a clerk in Mr. Wardlaw's office; they were sent me at my request."

The expert seemed pleased at this reply; his brow cleared, and he said, "Then I don't mind telling you that those two reports will bring Penfold's case within my province. To speak plainly, Miss Rolleston, your newspaper extracts — ARE FORGERIES."

CHAPTER LVII.

"FORGERIES!" cried Helen, with innocent horror.

"RANK FORGERIES," repeated the expert, coolly.

"Forgeries!" cried Helen. "Why, how can printed things be that?"

"That is what I should like to know," said the old lady.

"Why, what else can you call them?" said the expert. "They are got up to look like extracts from newspapers. But they were printed as they are, and were never in any journal. Shall I tell you how I found that out?"

"If you please, sir," said Helen.

"Well, then, I looked at the reverse side, and I found seven misprints in one slip, and five in the other. That was a great number to creep into printed slips of that length. The trial part did not show a single erratum. 'Hullo!' said I to myself; 'why, one side is printed more carefully than the other.' And that was not natural. The printing of advertisements is looked after quite as sharply as any other part in a journal. Why, the advertisers themselves cry out if they are misprinted."

"Oh, how shrewd!" cried Helen.

"Child's play," said the expert. "Well, from that blot I went on. I looked at the edges, and they were cut too clean. A gentleman with a pair of scissors can't cut slips out of a paper like this. They were cut in the printer's office. Lastly, on holding them to the light, I found they had not been machined upon the plan now adopted by all newspapers; but worked by hand. In one word — forgeries!"

"Oh!" said Helen. "To think I should have handled forgeries, and shown them to you for real. Ah! I'm so glad; for now I have committed the same crime as Robert Penfold; I have uttered a forged document. Take me up and have me put in prison, for I am as guilty as ever he was." Her face shone with rapture at sharing Robert's guilt.

The expert was a little puzzled by sentiments so high-flown and unpractical.

"I think," said he, "you are hardly aware what a valuable discovery this may prove to you. However, the next step is to get me a specimen of the person's handwriting who furnished you with these. The chances are, he is the writer of the forged note."

Helen uttered an exclamation that was almost a scream. The inference took her quite by surprise. She looked at Mrs. Undercliff.

"He is right, I think," said the old lady.

"Right or wrong," said the expert, "the next step in the inquiry is to do what I said. But that demands great caution. You must write a short civil note to Mr. Hand, and just ask him some questions. Let me see; ask him what newspapers his extracts are from, and whether he has got any more. He will not tell you the truth; but no matter, we shall get hold of his handwriting."

"But, sir," said Helen, "there is no need for that. Mr. Hand sent me a note along with the extracts."

"The deuce he did. All the better. Any words in it that are in the forged note? Is Penfold in it, or Wardlaw?"

Helen reflected a moment, and then said she thought both those names were in it.

"Fetch me that note," said Undercliff, and his eyes sparkled. He was on a hot scent now.

"And let me study the genuine reports, and compare what they say with the forged ones," said Mrs. Undercliff.

"Oh, what friends I have found at last!" cried Helen.

She thanked them both warmly, and hurried home, for it was getting late.

Next day she brought Hand's letter to Mr. Undercliff, and devoured his countenance while he inspected it keenly, and compared it with the forged note.

The comparison was long and careful, but unsatisfactory. Mr. Undercliff could not conscientiously say whether Hand had written the forged note or not. There were pros and cons.

"We are in deeper water than I thought," said he. "The comparison must be enlarged. You must write as I suggested, and get another note out of Mr. Hand."

"And leave the prayer-book with me," said Mrs. Undercliff.

Helen complied with these instructions, and in due course received a civil line from Mr. Hand to say that the extracts had been sent him from the country by one of his fellow clerks, and he had locked them up, lest Mr. Michael Penfold, who was much respected in the office, should see them. He could not say where they came from; perhaps from some provincial paper. If of any value to Miss Rolleston, she was quite at liberty to keep him. He added there was a coffee-house in the city where she could read all the London papers of that date. This letter, which contained a great many more words than the other, was submitted to Undercliff. It puzzled him so that he set to work, and dissected every curve the writer's pen had made; but he could come to no positive conclusion, and he refused to utter his conjectures.

"We are in a deep water," said he.

Finally he told his mother he was at a standstill for the present.

"But I am not," said Mrs. Undercliff. She added, after a while, "I think there's felony at the bottom of this."

"Smells like it to me," said the expert.

"Then I want you to do something very clever for me."

"What is that?"

"I want you to forge something."

"Come! I say."

"Quite innocent, I assure you."

"Well, but it is a bad habit to commence."

"All depends on the object. This is to take in a forger; that is all."

The expert's eyes sparkled. He had always been sadly discontented with the efforts of forgers, and thought he could do better.

"I'll do it," said he gayly.

CHAPTER LVIII.

General Rolleston and his daughter sat at breakfast in the hotel. General Rolleston was reading the *Times*, and his eye lighted on something that made him start. He looked towards Helen, and his first impulse was to communicate it to her; but, on second thoughts, he preferred to put a question to her first.

"You have never told the Wardlaws what those sailors said?"

"No, papa. I think they ought to have been told; but you know you positively forbade me."

"Of course I did. Why afflict the old gentleman with such a tale? A couple of common sailors, who chose to fancy the ship was destroyed!"

"Who are better judges of such a thing than sailors?"

"Well, my child, if you think so, I can't help it. All I say, spare the old gentleman such a report. As for Arthur, to tell you the truth, I have mentioned the matter to him."

"Oh, papa! Then why forbid me to tell him? What did he say?"

"He was very much distressed. 'Destroy the ship my Helen was in!' said he: 'if I thought Wylie had done that, I'd kill him with my own hand, though I was hanged for it next minute.' I never saw the young fellow fire up so before. But when he came to think calmly over it a little while, he said: 'I hope this slander will never reach my father's ears; it would grieve him deeply. I only laugh at it."

"Laugh at it! and yet talk of killing?"

"Oh, people say they laugh at a thing when they are very angry all the time. However, as you are a good girl, and mind what you are told, I'll read you an advertisement that will make you stare. Here is Joseph Wylie, who, you say, wrecked the Proserpine, actually invited by Michael Penfold to call on him and hear of something to his advantage."

"Dear me!" said Helen; "how strange! Surely Mr. Penfold cannot know the character of that man. Stop a minute! Advertise for him? Then nobody knows where he lives? There, papa; you see he is afraid to go near Arthur Wardlaw: he knows he destroyed the ship. What a mystery it all is! And so Mr. Penfold is at home, after all; and not to send me a single line. I never met so much unkindness and discourtesy in all my life."

"Ah, my dear," said the general, "you never defied the world before, as you are doing now."

Helen sighed: but, presently recovering her spirit, said she had done without the world on her dear island, and she would not be its slave now.

As she was always as good as her word, she declined an invitation to play the lion, and, dressing herself in plain merino, went down that very evening to Michael Penfold's cottage.

We run thither a little before her, to relate briefly what had taken place there.

Nancy Rouse, as may well be imagined, was not the woman to burn two thousand pounds. She locked the notes up; and, after that night, became very reserved on that head, so much so that, at last, Mr. Penfold saw it was an interdicted topic, and dropped it in much wonder.

When Nancy came to think of it in daylight, she could not help suspecting Wylie had some hand in it; and it occurred to her that the old gentleman who lodged

next door, might be an agent of Wylie's and a spy on her. Wylie must have told him to push the two thousand pounds into her room: but what a strange thing to do! To be sure, he was a sailor, and sailors had been known to make sandwiches of bank-notes, and eat them. Still her good sense revolted against this theory, and she was sore puzzled; for, after all, there was the money, and she had seen it come through the wall. One thing appeared certain — Joe had not forgotten her; he was thinking of her as much as ever, or more than ever; so her spirits rose, she began singing and whistling again, and waited cunningly till Joe should reappear and explain his conduct. Hostage for his reappearance she held the two thousand pounds. She felt so strong and saucy, she was half sorry she had allowed Mr. Penfold to advertise; but, after all, it did not much matter, she could always declare to Joe she had never missed him, for her part, and the advertising was a folly of poor Mr. Penfold's.

Matters were in this condition when the little servant came up one evening to Mr. Penfold, and said there was a young lady to see him.

"A young lady for *me?*" said he.

"Oh, she won't eat you, while I am by," said the sharp little girl. "It is a lady, and the same what come before."

"Perhaps she will oblige me with her name," said Michael, timidly.

"I won't show her up till she do," said this mite of a servant, who had been scolded by Nancy for not extracting that information on Helen's last visit.

"Of course, I must receive her," said Michael, half-consulting the mite. It belonged to a sex which promptly assumes the control of such gentle creatures as he was.

"Is Miss Rouse in the way?" said he.

The mite laughed, and said, —

"She is only gone down the street. I'll send her in to take care on you."

With this she went off, and in due course led Helen up the stairs. She ran in, and whispered in Michael's ear, —

"It is Miss Helen Rolleston."

Thus they announced a lady at No. 3.

Michael stared with wonder at so great a personage visiting him; and the next moment Helen glided into the room, blushing a little, and even panting inaudibly, but all on her guard. She saw before her a rather stately figure, and a face truly venerable, benignant, and beautiful, though deficient in strength. She cast a devouring glance on him as she courtesied to him; and it instantly flashed across her, "But for you there would be no Robert Penfold." There was an unconscious tenderness in her voice as she spoke to him, for she had to open the interview.

"Mr. Penfold, I fear my visit may surprise you, as you did not write to me. But, when you hear what I am come about, I think you will not be displeased with me for coming."

"Displeased, madam? I am highly honored by your visit — a lady, who, I understand, is to be married to my worthy employer, Mr. Arthur. Pray be seated, madam."

"Thank you, sir."

Helen began in a low, thrilling voice, to which, however, she gave firmness by a resolute effort of her will:

"I am come to speak to you of one who is very dear to you, and to all who really know him."

"Dear to me? It is my son. The rest are gone. It is Robert."

And he began to tremble.

"Yes, it is Robert," said she, very softly; then turning her eyes away from him, lest his emotion should overcome her, she said, —

"He has laid me and my father under deep obligations."

She dragged her father in; for it was essential not to show Mr. Penfold she was in love with Robert.

"Obligations to my Robert? Ah, madam, it is very kind of you to say that, and cheer a desolate father's heart with praise of his lost son. But how could a poor unfortunate man in his position serve a lady like you?"

"He defended me against robbers, single-handed."

"Ah," said the old man, glowing with pride, and looking more beautiful than ever, "he was always as brave as a lion."

"That is nothing; he saved my life again, and again, and again."

"God bless him for it! and God bless you for coming and telling me of it. Oh, madam, he was always brave, and gentle, and just, and good; so noble, so unfortunate."

And the old man began to cry.

Helen's bosom heaved, and it cost her a bitter struggle not to throw her arms round the dear old man's neck and cry with him. But she came prepared for a sore trial of her feelings, and she clenched her hands and teeth, and would not give way an inch.

"Tell me how he saved your life, madam."

"He was in the ship, and in the boat with me."

"Ah, madam," said Michael, "that must have been some other Robert Penfold; not my son. He could not come home. His time was not up, you know."

"It was Robert Penfold, son of Michael Penfold."

"Excuse me a moment," said Michael; and he went to a drawer, and brought her a photograph of Robert. "Was it this Robert Penfold?"

The girl took the photograph and eyed it, and lowered her head over it.

"Yes," she murmured.

"And he was coming home in the ship with you. Is he mad? More trouble! more trouble!"

"Do not alarm yourself," said Helen; "he will not land in England for years," — here she stifled a sob — "and long ere that we shall have restored him to society."

Michael stared at that, and shook his head.

"Never," said he; "that is impossible."

"Why impossible?"

"They all say he is a felon."

"They all *shall* say that he is a martyr."

"And so he is; but how can that ever be proved?"

"I don't know. But I am sure that the truth can always be proved, if people have patience and perseverance."

"My sweet young lady," said Michael sadly, "you don't know the world."

"I am learning it fast, though. It may take me a few years perhaps to make powerful friends, to grope my way among forgers, and spies, and wicked dishonest people of all sorts, but so surely as you sit there, I'll clear Robert Penfold before I die."

The good feeble old man gazed on her with admiration and astonishment.

She subdued her flashing eye, and said with a smile, "And you shall help me. Mr. Penfold, let me ask you a question. I called here before; but you were gone to Edinburgh. Then I wrote to you at the office, begging you to let me know the moment you returned. Now, do not think I am angry; but pray tell me why you would not answer my letter."

Michael Penfold was not burdened with *amour propre;* but who has not got a little of it in some corner of his heart? "Miss Rolleston," said he, "I was born a gentleman, and was a man of fortune once, till false friends

ruined me. I am in business now, but still a gentleman: and neither as a gentleman nor as a man of business could I leave a lady's letter unanswered. I never did such a thing in all my life. I never got your letter," he said, quite put out, and his wrath was so like a dove's, that Helen smiled and said, —

"But I posted it myself. And my address was in it; yet it was not returned."

"Well, madam, it was not delivered, I assure you."

"It was intercepted, then."

He looked at her. She blushed, and said, "Yes, I am getting suspicious: ever since I found I was followed and watched. Excuse me a moment." She went to the window and peered through the curtains. She saw a man walking slowly by; he quickened his pace the moment she opened the curtain.

"Yes," said she, "it was intercepted, and I am watched wherever I go."

Before she could say any more a bustle was heard on the stairs, and in bounced Nancy Rouse, talking as she came. "Excuse me, Mr. Penfolds, but I can't wait no longer with my heart a-bursting; it *is!* it *is!* Oh my dear, sweet young lady; the Lord be praised. You really are here alive and well. Kiss you I must and shall: come back from the dead; there — there — there!"

"Nancy! my good, kind Nancy," cried Helen, and returned her embrace warmly.

Then followed a burst of broken explanations; and, at last, Helen made out that Nancy was the landlady, and had left Lambeth long ago.

"But dear heart," said she, "Mr. Penfolds, I'm properly jealous of you. To think of her coming here to see you, and not me!"

"But I didn't know you were here, Nancy." Then

followed a stream of inquiries, and such warm-hearted sympathy with all her dangers and troubles, that Helen was led into revealing the cause of it all.

"Nancy," said she, solemnly, "the ship was wilfully cast away; there was a villain on board that made holes in her on purpose, and sunk her."

Nancy lifted up her hands in astonishment. But Mr. Penfold was far more surprised and agitated.

"For Heaven's sake, don't say that!" he cried.

"Why not, sir?" said Helen; "it is the truth; and I have got the testimony of dying men to prove it."

"I am sorry for it. Pray don't let anybody know. Why, Wardlaws would lose the insurance of a hundred and sixty thousand pounds."

"Arthur Wardlaw knows it: my father told him."

"And he never told me," said Penfold, with growing surprise.

"Goodness me! what a world it is," cried Nancy. "Why, that was murder, and no less. It is a wonder she wasn't drownded, and another friend into the bargain that I had in that very ship. Oh, I wish I had the villain here that done it, I'd tear his eyes out."

Here the mite of a servant bounded in, radiant and giggling, gave Nancy a triumphant glance, and popped out again, holding the door open, through which in slouched a seafaring man, drawn by Penfold's advertisement, and decoyed into Nancy's presence by the imp of a girl, who thought to please her mistress.

Nancy, who for some days had secretly expected this visit, merely gave a little squeak; but Helen uttered a violent scream; and, upon that, Wylie recognized her, and literally staggered back a step or two, and these words fell out of his mouth: —

"The sick girl!"

Helen caught them.

"Ay!" cried she; "but she is alive in spite of you: alive to denounce you and to punish you."

She darted forward, and her eyes flashed lightning.

"Look at this man, all of you," she cried. "Look at him well: THIS IS THE WRETCH THAT SCUTTLED THE PROSERPINE!"

CHAPTER LIX.

"Oh, Miss Helen, how can you say that?" cried Nancy, in utter dismay. "I'll lay my life poor Joe never did no such wickedness."

But Helen waved her off without looking at her, and pointed at Wylie.

"Are you blind? Why does he cringe and cower at sight of me? I tell you he scuttled the Proserpine, and the great auger he did it with, I have seen and handled. Yes, sir, you destroyed a ship, and the lives of many innocent persons, whose blood now cries to Heaven against you; and if *I* am alive to tell the cruel tale, it is no thanks to you; for you did your best to kill me, and, what is worse, to kill Robert Penfold, this gentleman's son; for he was on board the ship. You are no better than an assassin."

"I am a man that's down," said Wylie, in a low and broken voice, hanging his head. "Don't hit me any more. I didn't mean to take anybody's life: I took my chance with the rest. Lady, as I'm a man, I have lain in my bed many's the night, crying like a child, with thinking you were dead. And now I am glad you are alive, to be revenged on me. Well, you see, it is your turn now; you have lost me my sweetheart there; she'll never speak to me again after this. Ah, the poor man gets all the blame. You don't ask who tempted me; and, if I was to tell you, you'd hate me worse than ever; so I'll belay. If I'm a sinner, I'm a sufferer: England's too hot to hold me; I've only to go to sea, and get drowned the quickest way." And with this he vented a deep sigh, and slouched out of the room.

Nancy sank into a seat, and threw her apron over her head, and rocked and sobbed as if her heart would break.

As for Helen Rolleston, she still stood in the middle of the room, burning with excitement.

Then poor old Michael came to her, and said, almost in a whisper, "It is a bad business; he is her sweetheart, and she had the highest opinion of him."

This softened Helen in a great measure. She turned and looked at Nancy, and said: "Oh, dear! what a miserable thing. But I couldn't know that."

After a while, she drew a chair, and sat down by Nancy, and said: "I won't *punish* him, Nancy."

Nancy burst out sobbing afresh.

"You *have* punished him," said she, brusquely, "and me too, as never did you no harm. You have driven him out of the country, you have."

At this piece of feminine justice Helen's anger revived. "So, then," said she, "ships are to be destroyed, and ladies and gentlemen murdered, and nobody is to complain, nor say an angry word, if the wretch happens to be paying his addresses to you: that makes up for all the crimes in the world. What! Can an honest woman like you lose all sense of right and wrong for a man? And such a man!"

"Why, he is as well-made a fellow as ever I saw," sobbed Nancy.

"Oh, is he?" said Helen, ironically — her views of manly beauty were different, and black eyes a *sine qua non* with her —"then it is a pity his soul is not made to correspond. I hope by my next visit you will have learned to despise him as you ought. Why, if I loved a man ever so, I'd tear him out of my heart if he committed a crime; ay, though I tore my soul out of my body to do it."

"No, you wouldn't," said Nancy, recovering some of

her natural pugnacity; "for we are all tarred with the same stick, gentle or simple."

"But I assure you I would," said Helen; "and so ought you."

"Well, miss, you begin," cried Nancy, suddenly firing up through her tears. "If the Proserpine was scuttled, which I've your word for it, Miss Helen, and I never knew you tell a lie, why, your sweetheart is more to blame for it than mine."

Helen rose with dignity.

"You are in grief," said she. "I leave you to consider whether you have done well to affront me in your own house." And she was moving to the door with great dignity when Nancy ran and stopped her.

"Oh, don't leave me so, Miss Helen," she cried; "don't you go to quarrel with me for speaking the truth too plain and rude, as is a plain-spoken body at the best; and in such grief myself, I scarce know what I do say. But, indeed, and in truth, you mustn't go and put it abroad that the ship was scuttled; if you do, you won't hurt Joe Wylie; he'll get a ship, and fly the country. Who you'll hurt will be your own husband, as is to be — Wardlaws."

"Shall I, Mr. Penfold?" asked Helen disdainfully.

"Well, madam, certainly it might create some unworthy suspicion."

"Suspicion?" cried Nancy. "Don't you think to throw dust in my eyes. What had poor Joe to gain by destroying that there ship, and risking his own life? — you know very well he was bribed to do it. And who bribed him? Who should bribe him, but the man as owned the ship?"

"Miss Rouse," said Mr. Penfold, "I sympathize with your grief, and make great allowance; but I will not sit here and hear my worthy employers blackened with such

terrible insinuations. The great house of Wardlaw bribe a sailor to scuttle their own ship, with Miss Rolleston and one hundred and sixty thousand pounds' worth of gold on board! Monstrous — monstrous!"

"Then what did Joe Wylie mean?" replied Nancy. "Says he, 'The poor man gets all the blame. If I was to tell you who tempted me,' says he, 'you'd hate me worse.' Then I say, why should she hate him worse? Because it's her sweetheart tempted mine. I stands to that."

This inference, thus worded, struck Helen as so droll that she turned her head aside to giggle a little. But old Penfold replied loftily, —

"Who cares what a *Wylie* says against a great old mercantile house of London City?"

"Very well, Mr. Penfolds," said Nancy, with one great final sob, and dried her eyes with her apron; and she did it with such an air, they both saw she was not going to shed another tear about the matter. "Very well; you be both against me; then I'll say no more. But I know what I know."

"And what do you know?" inquired Helen.

"Time will show," said Nancy, turning suddenly very dogged. "Time will show."

Nothing more was to be got out of her after that; and Helen, soon after, made her a civil though stiff little speech, regretted the pain she had inadvertently caused her, and went away, after leaving Mr. Penfold her address.

On her return home, she entered the whole adventure in her diary. She made a separate entry to this effect: —

Mysterious. — My letter to Mr. Penfold at the office intercepted.

Wylie hints that he was bribed by Messrs. Wardlaw.

Nancy Rouse suspects that it was Arthur, and says time will show.

As for me, I can neither see why Wylie should scuttle the ship unless he was bribed by somebody, nor what Arthur or his father could gain by destroying that ship. This is all as dark as that more cruel mystery, which alone I care to solve.

CHAPTER LX.

Next morning, after a sleepless night, Nancy Rouse said to Mr. Penfold, "Haven't I heard you say as bank-notes could be traced to folk?"

"Certainly, madam," said Michael; "but it is necessary to take the numbers of them."

"Oh! And how do you do that?"

"Why, every note has its own number."

"La! ye don't say so; then them fifties are all numbered, belike."

"Certainly, and if you wish me to take down the numbers, I will do so."

"Well, sir, some other day you shall. I could not bear the sight of them just yet; for it is them as has been the ruin of poor Joe Wylie, I do think."

Michael could not follow this; but, the question having been raised, he advised her, on grounds of common prudence, not to keep them in the house without taking down their numbers.

"We will talk about that in the evening," said Nancy.

Accordingly, at night, Nancy produced the notes, and Michael took down the numbers and descriptions in his pocketbook. They ran from 16,444 to 16,483. And he promised her to try and ascertain through what hands they had passed. He said he had a friend in the Bank of England, who might perhaps be able to discover to what private bank they had been issued in the first instance, and then those bankers, on a strong representation, might perhaps examine their books and say to whom they had paid them. He told her the notes were

quite new, and evidently had not been separated since their first issue.

Nancy caught a glimpse of his meaning, and set herself doggedly to watch until the person, who had passed the notes through the chimney, should come for them. "He will miss them," said she, "you mark my words."

Thus Helen, though reduced to a standstill herself, had set an inquiry on foot, which was alive and ramifying.

In the course of a few days she received a visit from Mrs. Undercliff. That lady came in, and laid a prayer-book on the table, saying, "I have brought it you back, miss; and I want you to do something for my satisfaction."

"Oh, certainly," said Helen. "What is it?"

"Well, miss, first examine the book and the writing. Is it all right?"

Helen examined it, and said it was. "Indeed," said she, "the binding looks fresher, if anything."

"You have a good eye," said Mrs. Undercliff. "Well, what I want you to do is — of course Mr. Wardlaw is a good deal about you?"

"Yes."

"Does he go to church with you ever?"

"No."

"But he would if you were to ask him."

"I have no doubt he would; but why?"

"Manage matters so that he shall go to church with you, and then put the book down for him to see the writing, all in a moment. Watch his face and tell me."

Helen colored up and said, "No; I can't do that. Why, it would be turning God's temple into a trap. Besides —"

"The real reason first, if you don't mind," said this horribly shrewd old woman.

"Well, Mr. Arthur Wardlaw is the gentleman I am going to marry."

"Good heavens!" cried Mrs. Undercliff, taken utterly aback by this most unexpected turn. "Why, you never told me that!"

"No," said Helen blushingly. "I did not think it necessary to go into that. Well, of course it is not in human nature that Mr. Wardlaw should be zealous in my good work, or put himself forward; but he has never refused to lend me any help that was in his power; and it is repugnant to my nature to suspect him of a crime, and to my feelings to lay a trap for him."

"Quite right," said Mrs. Undercliff; "of course I had no idea you were going to marry Mr. Wardlaw. I made sure Mr. Penfold was the man."

Helen blushed higher still, but made no reply.

Mrs. Undercliff turned the conversation directly. "My son has given many hours to Mr. Hand's two letters, and he told me to say he is beginning to doubt whether Mr. Hand is a real person, with a real handwriting at all."

"Oh, Mrs. Undercliff! Why, he wrote me two letters. However, I will ask Mr. Penfold whether Mr. Hand exists or not. When shall I have the pleasure of seeing you again?"

"Whenever you like, my dear young lady; but not upon this business of Penfold and Wardlaw. I have done with it forever; and my advice to you, miss, is not to stir the mud any more." And with these mysterious words the old lady retired, leaving Helen deeply discouraged at her desertion.

However she noted down the conversation in her diary, and made this comment: — People find no pleasure in proving an accused person innocent; the charm is, to detect guilt. This day a good, kind friend abandons me because I will not turn aside from my charitable mission

to suspect another person who is as wrongfully suspected as he I love has been.

Mem.: To see, or make inquiries about, Mr. Hand.

General Rolleston had taken a furnished house in Hanover Square. He now moved into it, and Helen was compelled to busy herself in household arrangements.

She made the house charming; but unfortunately stood in a draught whilst heated, and caught a chill, which a year ago would very likely have gone to her lungs and killed her, but now settled on her limbs in violent neuralgic pains and confined her to her bed for a fortnight.

She suffered severely; but had the consolation of finding she was tenderly beloved. Arthur sent flowers every day and affectionate notes twice a day. And her father was constantly by her bedside.

At last she came down to the drawing-room, but lay on the sofa, well wrapped up, and received only her most intimate friends. The neuralgia had now settled on her right arm and hand, so that she could not write a letter; and she said to herself, with a sigh, "Oh, how unfit a girl is to do anything great. We always fall ill, just when health and strength are most needed."

Nevertheless, during this period of illness and inaction, circumstances occurred that gave her joy.

Old Wardlaw had long been exerting himself in influential channels to obtain what he called justice for his friend Rolleston; and had received some very encouraging promises; for the general's services were indisputable; and while he was stirring the matter, Helen was unconsciously co-operating by her beauty, and the noise her adventure made in society. At last a gentleman, whose wife was about the Queen, promised old Wardlaw one day that, if a fair opportunity should

occur, that lady should tell Helen's adventure, and how the gallant old general, when everybody else despaired, had gone out to the Pacific and found his daughter and brought her home. This lady was a courtier of ten years' standing, and waited her opportunity; but, when it did come, she took it, and she soon found that no great tact or skill was necessary on such an occasion as this. She was listened to with ready sympathy, and the very next day some inquiries were made, the result of which was that the Horse-Guards offered Lieutenant-General Rolleston the command of a crack regiment and a full generalship. At the same time, it was intimated to him from another official quarter that a baronetcy was at his service, if he felt disposed to accept it. The tears came into the stout old warrior's eyes, at this sudden sunshine of royal favor, and Helen kissed old Wardlaw of her own accord; and the star of the Wardlaws rose into the ascendant, and for a time Robert Penfold seemed to be quite forgotten.

The very day General Rolleston became Sir Edward, a man and a woman called at the Charing Cross Hotel, and asked for Miss Helen Rolleston.

The answer was, she had left the hotel about ten days.

"Where is she gone, if you please?"

"We don't know."

"Why, hasn't she left her new address?"

"No. The footman came for letters several times."

No information was to be got here, and Mr. Penfold and Nancy Rouse went home greatly puzzled what to do.

At first sight it might appear easy for Mr. Penfold to learn the new address of Miss Rolleston. He had only to ask Arthur Wardlaw. But, to tell the truth, during the last fortnight Nancy Rouse had impressed her views steadily and persistently on his mind, and he had also

made a discovery that co-operated with her influence and arguments to undermine his confidence in his employer. What that discovery was, we must leave him to relate.

Looking, then, at matters with a less unsuspicious eye than heretofore, he could not help observing that Arthur Wardlaw never put into the office letter-box a single letter for his sweetheart. "He must write to her," thought Michael: "but I am not to know her address. Suppose after all he did intercept that letter."

And now, like other simple credulous men, whose confidence has been shaken, he was literally brimful of suspicions, some of them reasonable, some of them rather absurd.

He had too little art to conceal his change of mind, and so, very soon after his vain attempt to see Helen Rolleston at the inn, he was bundled off to Scotland on business of the office.

Nancy missed him sorely. She felt quite alone in the world. She managed to get through the day — work helped her; but at night she sat disconsolate and bewildered, and she was now beginning to doubt her own theory. For certainly, if all that money had been Joe Wylie's, he would hardly have left the country without it.

Now, the second evening after Michael's departure, she was seated in his room, brooding, when suddenly she heard a peculiar knocking next door.

She listened a little while, and then stole softly downstairs to her own little room.

Her suspicions were correct. It was the same sort of knocking that had preceded the phenomenon of the hand and bank-notes. She peeped into the kitchen and whispered, "Jenny — Polly — come here."

A stout washerwoman and the mite of a servant came

wondering. "Now you stand there," said Nancy, "and do as I bid you. Hold your tongues now. I know all about it."

The myrmidons stood silent, but with panting bosoms; for the mysterious knocking now concluded, and a brick in the chimney began to move.

It came out, and immediately a hand, with a ring on it, came through the aperture and felt about.

The mite stood firm, but the big washerwoman gave signs of agitation that promised to end in a scream.

Nancy put her hand roughly before the woman's mouth. "Hold your tongue, ye great soft — " And without finishing her sentence, she darted to the chimney, and seized the hand with both her own, and pulled it with such violence that the wrist followed it through the masonry, and a muffled roar was heard.

"Hold on to my waist, Polly," she cried. "Jenny, take the poker, and that string, and tie his hand to it while we hold on. Quick! quick! Are ye asleep?"

Thus adjured, the mite got the poker against the wall, and tried to tie the wrist to it.

This, however, was not so easy: the hand struggled so desperately.

However, pulling is a matter of weight rather than muscle: and the weight of the two women pulling downwards overpowered the violent struggles of the man; and the mite contrived to tie the poker to the wrist, and repeat the ligatures a dozen times in a figure of eight.

Then the owner of the hand, who had hitherto shown violent strength taken at a disadvantage, now showed intelligence. Convinced that skill as well as force were against him, he ceased to struggle and became quite quiet.

The women contemplated their feat with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes.

When they had feasted a reasonable time on the

imprisoned hand, and two of them, true to their sex, had scrutinized a green stone upon one of the fingers to see whether it was real or false, Nancy took them by the shoulders and bundled them good-humoredly out of the room.

She then lowered the gas and came out, and locked the room up, and put the key in her pocket.

"I'll have my supper with you," said she. "Come, Jenny, I'm cook; and you make the kitchen as a body could eat off it, for I expecs visitors."

"La, ma'am," said the mite; "he can't get out of the chimbly to visit hus through the street door."

"No, girl," said Nancy. "But he can send a hambassador: so Show her heyes and plague her art, as the play says, for of all the dirty kitchens give me hers. I never was there but once, and my slipper came off for the muck, a-sticking to a body like a birdlime."

There was a knock at Nancy's street; the little servant, full of curiosity, was for running to it on the instant. But Nancy checked her.

"Take your time," said she. "It is only a lodging-house keeper."

CHAPTER LXI.

Sir Edward Rolleston could not but feel his obligations to the Wardlaws, and, when his daughter got better, he spoke warmly on the subject, and asked her to consider seriously whether she had not tried Arthur's affection sufficiently.

"He does not complain to you, I know," said he; "but he feels it very hard, that you should punish him for an act of injustice which has already so deeply afflicted him. He says he believes some fool or villain heard him say that two thousand pounds was to be borrowed between them, and went and imposed on Robert Penfold's credulity, meaning, perhaps, to call again after the note had been cashed, and get Arthur's share of the money."

"But why did not Arthur come forward?"

"He declares he did not know when the trial was, till a month after, and his father bears him out: says he was actually delirious, and his life in danger. I myself can testify that he was cut down just in this way, when he heard the Proserpine was lost, and you on board her. Why not give him credit for the same genuine distress at young Penfold's misfortune? Come, Helen, is it fair to afflict and punish this gentleman for the misfortune of another, whom he never speaks of but with affection and pity? He says that if you would marry him at once, he thinks he should feel strong enough to throw himself into the case with you, and would spare neither money nor labor to clear Robert Penfold; but, as it is, he says he feels so wretched and so tortured with jealousy, that he can't co-operate warmly with you, though his con-

science reproaches him every day. Poor young man! His is really a very hard case; for you promised him your hand before you ever saw Robert Penfold."

"I did," said Helen; "but I did not say when. Let me have one year for my good work, before I devote my whole life to Arthur."

"Well, it will be a year wasted. Why postpone your marriage for that?"

"I promised."

"Yes; but he chose to fancy young Wardlaw is his enemy. You might relax that, now Arthur tells you he will co-operate with you as your husband. Now, Helen, tell the truth — is it a woman's work? Have you found it so? Will not Arthur do it better than you?"

Helen, weakened already by days of suffering, began to cry, and say, "What shall I do? — what shall I do?"

"If you have any doubt, my dear," said Sir Edward, "then think of what I owe to the Wardlaws."

And, with that, he kissed her, and left her in tears; and, soon after, sent Arthur himself up to plead his own cause.

It was a fine summer afternoon. The long French casements, looking on the garden of the square, were open, and the balmy air came in and wooed the beautiful girl's cheek, and just stirred her hair at times.

Arthur Wardlaw came softly in, and gazed at her as she lay. Her loveliness filled his heart and soul. He came and knelt by her sofa, and took her hand, and kissed it, and his own eyes glistened with tenderness.

He had one thing in his favor. He loved her.

Her knowledge of this had more than once befriended him, and made her refuse to suspect him of any great ill; it befriended him now. She turned a look of angelic pity on him.

"Poor Arthur!" she said. "You and I are both unhappy."

"But we shall be happy ere long, I hope," said Arthur.

Helen shook her head.

Then he petted her, and coaxed her, and said he would be her servant as well as her husband, and no wish of her heart should go ungratified.

"None?" said she, fixing her eyes on him.

"Not one," said he; "upon my honor!"

Then he was so soft and persuasive, and alluded so delicately to her plighted faith, that she felt like a poor bird, caught in a silken net.

"Sir Edward is very good," said he; "he feels for me."

At that moment a note was sent up.

"Mr. Wardlaw is here, and has asked me when the marriage is to be. I can't tell him. I look like a fool."

Helen sighed deeply, and began to shed those tears that weaken a woman. She glanced despairingly to and fro, and saw no escape. Then, Heaven knows why or wherefore, — probably with no clear design at all but a woman's weak desire to cause a momentary diversion: to put off the inevitable for five minutes, — she said to Arthur, "Please give me that prayer-book. Thank you. It is right you should know this." And she put Cooper's deposition and Welch's into his hands.

He devoured them, and started up in great indignation. "It is an abominable slander," said he. "We have lost ten thousand pounds by the wreck of that ship, and Wylie's life was saved by a miracle as well as your own. It is a foul slander. I hurl it from me." And he made his words good by whirling the prayer-book out of the window.

Helen uttered a scream. "My mother's prayer-book!" she cried.

"Oh! I beg pardon," said he.

"And well you may," said she. "Ring, and send George after it."

"No, I'll go myself," said he. "Pray forgive me. You don't know what a terrible slander they have desecrated your prayer-book with."

He ran out, and was a long time gone. He came back at last, looking terrified.

"I can't find it," said he; "somebody has carried it off. Oh, how unfortunate I am!"

"Not find it!" said Helen. "But it *must* be found."

"Of course, it must be found," said Arthur. "A pretty scandal to go into the hands of Heaven knows who! I shall offer twenty guineas reward for it at once. I'll go down to the *Times* this moment. Was ever anything so unlucky?"

"Yes, go at once," said Helen, "and I'll send the servants into the square. I don't want to say anything unkind, Arthur, but you ought not to have thrown my prayer-book into the public street."

"I know I ought not. I am ashamed of it myself."

"Well, let me *see* the advertisement."

"You shall. I have no doubt we shall recover it."

Next morning the *Times* contained an advertisement, offering twenty guineas for a prayer-book lost in Hanover Square, and valuable not in itself, but as a relic of a deceased parent.

In the afternoon, Arthur called to know if anybody had brought the prayer-book back.

Helen shook her head sadly, and said, "No."

He seemed very sorry, and so penitent, that Helen said, "Do not despair; and, if it is gone, why, I must remember you have forgiven me something, and I must forgive you."

The footman came in.

"If you please, miss, here is a woman wishes to speak to you; says she has brought a prayer-book."

"Oh, show her up at once!" cried Helen.

Arthur turned away his head to hide a cynical smile. He had good reasons for thinking it was not the one he had flung out of the window yesterday.

A tall woman came in, wearing a thick veil that concealed her features.

She entered on her business at once.

"You lost a prayer-book in this square yesterday, madam."

"Yes."

"You offer twenty guineas reward for it."

"Yes."

"Please to look at this one."

Helen examined it, and said, with joy, it was hers.

Arthur was thunderstruck. He could not believe his senses.

"Let me look at it," said he.

His eyes went at once to the writing. He turned as pale as death, and stood petrified.

The woman took the prayer-book out of his unresisting hand, and said, —

"You'll excuse me, sir; but it is a large reward, and gentlefolks sometimes go from their word when the article is found."

Helen, who was delighted at getting back her book, and rather tickled at Arthur having to pay twenty guineas for losing it, burst out laughing, and said: "Give her the reward, Arthur; I am not going to pay for your misdeeds."

"With all my heart," said Arthur, struggling for composure.

He sat down to draw a check.

"What name shall I put?"

"Hum! Edith Hesket."

"Two t's?"

"No, only one."

"There."

"Thank you, sir."

She put the check into her purse, and brought the prayer-book to Helen.

"Lock it up at once," said she, in a voice so low that Arthur heard a murmur, but not the words; and she retired, leaving Helen staring with amazement, and Arthur in a cold perspiration.

CHAPTER LXII.

When the Springbok weighed anchor and left the island, a solitary form was seen on Telegraph Hill.

When she passed eastward, out of sight of that point, a solitary figure was seen on the cliffs.

When her course brought the island dead astern of her, a solitary figure stood on the east bluff of the island, and was the last object seen from the boat as she left those waters forever.

What words can tell the sickening sorrow and utter desolation that possessed that yearning bosom!

When the boat that had carried Helen away was out of sight, he came back with uneven steps to the cave, and looked at all the familiar objects with stony eyes, and scarce recognized them, for the sunshine of her presence was there no more. He wandered to and fro in a heavy stupor, broken every now and then by sharp pangs of agony that almost made him scream. And so the poor, bereaved creature wandered about all day. He could not eat, he could not sleep, his misery was more than he could bear. One day of desolation succeeded another. And what men say so hastily was true for once. "His life was a burden." He dragged it about with him, he scarce knew how.

He began to hate all the things he had loved whilst she was there. The beautiful cave, all glorious with pearl, that he had made for her, he could not enter it; the sight killed him, and she not there.

He left Paradise Bay altogether at last, and anchored his boat in a nook of Seal Bay. And there he slept in

general. But sometimes he would lie down, wherever he happened to be, and sleep as long as he could.

To him to wake was a calamity. And, when he did wake, it was always with a dire sense of reviving misery, and a deep sigh at the dark day he knew awaited him.

His flesh wasted on his bones, and his clothes hung loosely about him. The sorrow of the mind reduced him almost to that miserable condition in which he had landed on the island.

The dog and the seal were faithful to him: used to lie beside him, and often whimpered; their minds, accustomed to communicate without the aid of speech, found out, Heaven knows how, that he was in grief or in sickness.

These two creatures, perhaps, saved his life, or his reason. They came between his bereaved heart and utter solitude.

Thus passed a month of wretchedness unspeakable.

Then his grief took a less sullen form.

He came back to Paradise Bay, and at sight of it burst into a passion of weeping.

These were his first tears, and inaugurated a grief more tender than ever, but less akin to madness and despair.

Now he used to go about and cry her name aloud, passionately, by night and day.

"Oh, Helen! Helen!"

And next, his mind changed in one respect, and he clung to every reminiscence of her. Every morning he went round her haunts, and kissed every place where he had seen her put her hand.

Only the cave he could not yet face.

He tried, too. He went to the mouth of it again and again, and looked in; but go into it and face it, empty of her — he could not.

He prayed often.

One night he saw her in a dream.

She bent a look of angelic pity on him, and said but these words, "Live in my cave," then vanished.

Alone on an island in the vast Pacific, who can escape superstition? It fills the air. He took this communication as a command, and the next night he slept in the cave.

But he entered it in the dark and left it before dawn.

By degrees, however, he plucked up courage, and faced it in daylight. But it was a sad trial; he came out crying bitterly after a few minutes.

Still he persevered, because her image had bade him, and at last, one evening, he even lighted the lamp, and sat there, looking at the glorious walls and roof his hapless love had made.

Getting stronger by degrees, he searched about and found little relics of her, a glove, a needle, a great hat she had made out of some large leaves. And all these he wept over and cherished.

But one day he found at the very back of the cave a relic, that made him start as if a viper had stung his loving heart. It was a letter.

He knew it in a moment. It had already caused him many a pang; but now it almost drove him mad. Arthur Wardlaw's letter.

He recoiled from it and let it lie. He went out of the cave, and cursed his hard fate. But he came back. It was one of those horrible things a man abhors, yet cannot keep away from. He took it up, and dashed it down with rage many times; but it all ended in his lighting the lamp at night, and torturing himself with every word of that loving letter.

And she was going home to the writer of that letter, and he was left prisoner on the island. He cursed his

generous folly, and writhed in agony at the thought. He raged with jealousy, so that his very grief was blunted for a time.

He felt as if he must go mad.

Then he prayed — prayed fervently. And at last, worn out with such fierce and contending emotions, he fell into a deep sleep, and did not wake till the sun was high in heaven.

He woke; and the first thing he saw was the fatal letter lying at his feet in a narrow stream of sunshine that came peering in.

He eyed it with horror. This, then, was to haunt him by night and day.

He eyed it, and eyed it. Then turned his face from it. But could not help eying it again.

And at last, certain words in this letter seemed to him to bear an affinity to another piece of writing that had also caused him a great woe. Memory, by its subtle links, connected these two enemies of his together. He eyed it still more keenly, and that impression became strengthened. He took the letter and looked at it close, and held it at arm's length, and devoured it, and the effect of this keen examination was very remarkable. It seemed to restore the man to energy and to something like hope. His eyes sparkled, and a triumphant ah! burst from his bosom.

He became once more a man of action. He rose, and bathed, and walked rapidly to and fro upon the sands, working himself up to a daring enterprise. He took his saw into the jungle, and cut down a tree of a kind common enough there. It was wonderfully soft, and almost as light as cork. The wood of this tree was literally useless for any other purpose than that to which Penfold destined it. He cut a great many blocks of this wood, and drilled holes in them, and, having hundreds

of yards of good line, attached these quasi corks to the gunwale, so as to make a lifeboat. This work took him several days, during which time an event occurred that encouraged him.

One morning he saw about a million birds very busy in the bay, and it proved to be a spermaceti whale come ashore.

He went out to her directly with all his tools, for he wanted oil for his enterprise, and the seal oil was exhausted.

When he got near the whale in his boat, he observed a harpoon sticking in the animal's back. He cut steps with his axe in the slippery carcass, and got up to it as well as he could, extracted it by cutting and pulling, and threw it down into his boat, but not till he had taken the precaution to stick a great piece of blubber on the barbed point. He then sawed and hacked under difficulties, being buffeted and bothered with thousands of birds, so eager for slices, that it was as much as he could do to avoid the making of minced fowl; but true to his gentle creed, he contrived to get three hundred weight of blubber without downright killing any of these greedy competitors, though he buffeted some of them, and nearly knocked out what little sense they had. He came ashore with his blubber and harpoon, and, when he came to examine the latter, he found that the name of the owner was cut deeply in the steel. Josh. Fullalove, J. Fernandez. This inscription had a great effect on Robert Penfold's mind. It seemed to bring the island of Juan Fernandez, and humanity in general, nearer to him.

He boiled down the blubber, and put a barrel of oil on board his life-boat. He had a ship's lantern to burn it in. He also pitched her bottom as far as he could get at it, and provisioned her for a long voyage; taking care

to lash the water-cask and beef-cask to the fore thwart and foremast, in case of rough water.

When he had done all this, it occurred to him suddenly, that should he ever escape the winds and waves, and get to England, he would then have to encounter difficulties and dangers of another class, and lose the battle by his poverty.

"I play my last stake now," said he. "I will throw no chance away."

He reflected, with great bitterness, on the misery that want of money had already brought on him, and he vowed to reach England rich, or go to the bottom of the Pacific.

This may seem a strange vow for a man to make on an unknown island; but Robert Penfold had a powerful understanding, sharpened by adversity, and his judgment told him truly that he possessed wealth on this island, both directly and indirectly. In the first place, knowledge is sometimes wealth, and the knowledge of this island was a thing he could sell to the American merchants on the coast of Chili; and with this view, he put on board his boat specimens of the cassia and other woods, fruit, spices, pitch, guano, pink and red coral, pearl oysters, shells, cochineal, quartz, cotton, etc., etc.

Then he took his chisel and struck all the larger pearls off the shells that lined Helen's cave. The walls and roof yielded nine enormous pearls, thirty large ones, and a great many of the usual size.

He made a pocket inside his waistcoat to hold the pearls safe.

Then he took his spade and dug into the Spanish ship for treasure. But this was terrible work. The sand returned upon the spade and trebled his labor.

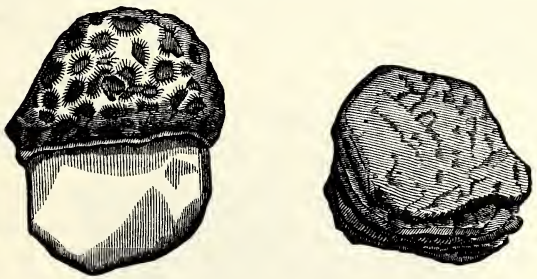
The condition to which time and long submersion had reduced this ship and cargo was truly remarkable.

Nothing to be seen of the deck but a thin brown streak that mingled with the sand in patches: of the timbers nothing but the uprights, and of those the larger half eaten and dissolved.

He dug five days and found nothing solid.

On the sixth, being now at the bottom of the ship, he struck his spade against something hard and heavy.

On inspection it looked like ore, but of what metal he could not tell; it was as black as a coal. He threw this on one side, and found nothing more; but the next day he turned up some smaller fragments, which he took home and cleaned with lime juice.



They came out bright in places like silver, and the preceding is a fair representation of their appearance.

One piece was evidently a conglomeration of several silver coins, and the other was a single coin encrusted with some marine growth or other.

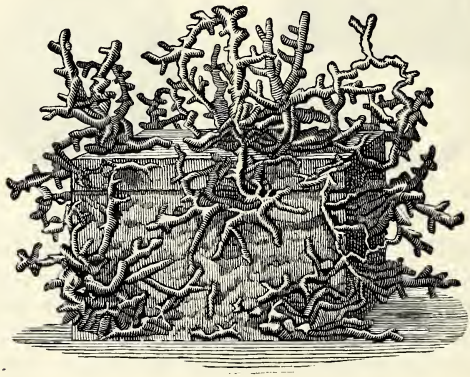
This discovery threw light on the other. The piece of black ore, weighing about seven pounds, was in reality silver coin that a century of submersion had reduced to the very appearance it wore before it ever went into the furnace.

He dug with fresh energy on this discovery, but found nothing more in the ship that day.

Then it occurred to him to carry off a few hundred weight of pink coral.

He got some fine specimens; and, while he was at that work, he fell in with a piece that looked very solid at the root, and unnaturally heavy. On a nearer examination this proved to be a foreign substance encrusted with coral. It had twined and twisted and curled over the thing in a most unheard-of way. Robert took it home, and by rubbing here and there with lemon juice, at last satisfied himself that this object was a silver box about the size of an octavo volume.

It had no keyhole: had evidently been soldered up for greater security; and Robert was left to conjecture how it had come there. We subjoin a representation of this curious object.



He connected it at once with the ship, and felt assured that some attempt had been made to save it. There it had lain by the side of the vessel all these years, but falling clear of the sand had been embraced by the growing coral, and was now a curiosity, if not a treasure.

He would not break the coral, but put it on board his life-boat just as it was.

And now he dug no more. He thought he could sell the galleon as well as the island, by sample, and he was impatient to be gone.

He reproached himself, a little unjustly, for allowing a woman to undertake the task of clearing him.

"To what annoyances, and perhaps affronts, have I exposed her!" said he. "No, it is a man's business to defend, not to be defended."

To conclude. At high tide one fine afternoon he went on board with Ponto, and, hoisting his foresail only, crossed the bay, ranging along the island till he reached the bluff. He got under this, and by means of his compass and previous observations, set the boat's head exactly on the line the ducks used to take. Then he set his mainsail too, and stretched boldly out across the great Pacific Ocean.

Time seems to wear out everything, even bad luck. It ran strong against Robert Penfold for years: but, when it had struck its worst blow, and parted him and Helen Rolleston, it relaxed, and a tide of good luck set in, which, unfortunately, the broken-hearted man could not appreciate at the time. However, so it was. He wanted oil, and a whale came ashore. He wanted treasure, and the sea gave him a little back of all it had swallowed: and now he wanted fine weather; and the ocean for days and nights was like peach-colored glass, dimpled here and there: and soft westerly airs fanned him along by night and day.

To be sure, he was on the true Pacific Ocean, at a period when it is really free from storms. Still, even for that latitude, he had wonderful weather for six days, and on the seventh he fell in with a schooner, the skip-

per and crew of which looked over the bulwarks at him with wonder and cordiality, and, casting out a rope astern, took him in tow.

The skipper had been eying him with amazement for some hours through his telescope: but he was a man that had seen a great many strange things, and it was also a point of honor with him never to allow that he was astonished, or taken by surprise, or greatly moved.

"Wal, stranger," said he, "what craft is that?"

"The Helen."

"Where d'ye hail from? — not that I am curious."

"From an unknown island."

"Do tell. What, another! Is it anyways nigh?"

"Not within seven hundred miles."

"Je—rusalem! Have you sailed all that in a cockle shell?"

"Yes."

"Why, what are ye? the Wandering Jew afloat, or the Ancient Mariner? or only a kinder nautilus?"

"I'm a landsman."

"A landsman! then so is Neptune. What is your name, when you are ashore?"

"Robert Penfold. The Rev. Robert Penfold."

"The Rev.! — Je—rusalem!"

"May I ask what is your name, sir?"

"Wal, I reckon you may, stranger. I'm Joshua Fullalove from the States, at present located on the island of Juan Fernandez."

"Joshua Fullalove! That is lucky. I've got something that belongs to you."

He looked about and found the harpoon, and handed it up in a mighty straightforward simple way.

Joshua stared at him incredulously at first: but afterwards with amazement. He handled the harpoon, and inquired where Robert had fallen in with it. Robert told him.

"You're an honest man," said Fullalove, "you air. Come aboard." He was then pleased to congratulate himself on his strange luck in having drifted across an honest man in the middle of the ocean. "I've heerd," said he, "of an old chap as groped about all his life with a lantern and couldn't find one. Let's liquor."

He had some celestial mixture or other made, including rum, mint, and snow from the Andes, and then began his interrogatories again, disclaiming curiosity at set intervals.

"Whither bound, honest man?"

"The coast of Chili."

"What for?"

"Trade."

"D'ye bye or sell? Not that it is my business."

"I wish to sell."

"What's the merchandise?"

"Knowledge: and treasure."

Fullalove scratched his head. "Han't ye got a few conundrums to swap for gold-dust as well?"

Robert smiled, faintly: the first time this six weeks.

"I have to sell the knowledge of an island, with rich products; and I have to sell the contents of a Spanish treasure ship, that I found buried in the sand of that island."

The Yankee's eyes glistened.

"Wal," said he, "I do business in islands myself. I've leased this Juan Fernandez. But one of them is enough at a time. I'm monarch of all I survey: but then what I survey is a mixallaneous bilin' of Irish and Otaheitans, that it's pison to be monarch of. And now them darned Irish has taken to converting the heathens to superstition and the worship of images, and breaks their heads if they won't: and the heathens are all smiles and sweetness and immorality. No, islands is no bait to me."

"I never asked you," said Robert. "What I do ask you is to land me at Valparaiso. There I'll find a purchaser, and will pay you handsomely for your kindness."

"That is fair," said Fullalove, dryly. "What will you pay me?"

"I'll show you," said Robert. He took out of his pocket the smaller conglomeration of Spanish coin, and put it into Fullalove's hand. "That," said he, "is silver coin I dug out of the galleon."

Fullalove inspected it keenly, and trembled slightly. Robert then went lightly over the taffrail and slid down the low rope into his boat. He held up the black mass we have described.

"This is solid silver. I will give it you, and my best thanks, to land me at Valparaiso."

"Heave it aboard," said the Yankee.

Robert steadied himself, and hove it on board. The Yankee caught it, heavy as it was, and subjected it to some chemical test directly.

"Wal," said he, "that is a bargain. I'll land ye at Valparaiso for this. Jack, lay her head S.S.E. and by E."

Having given this order, he leaned over the taffrail and asked for more samples. Robert showed him the fruits, woods, and shells, and the pink coral; and bade him observe that the boat was ballasted with pearl oysters. He threw him up one, and a bunch of pink coral. He then shinned up the rope again, and the interrogatories recommenced. But this time he was questioned closely as to who he was, and how he came on the island? and the questions were so shrewd and penetrating that his fortitude gave way, and he cried out in anguish, "Man, man! do not torture me so. Oh! do not make me talk of my grief, and my wrongs; they are more than I can bear."

Fullalove forbore directly, and offered him a cigar. He took it, and it soothed him a little; it was long since he had smoked one. His agitation subsided, and a quiet tear or two rolled down his haggard cheek.

The Yankee saw, and kept silence.

But when the cigar was nearly smoked out, he said he was afraid Robert would not find a customer for his island, and what a pity Joshua Fullalove was cool on islands just now.

"Oh!" said Robert, "I know there are enterprising Americans on the coast who will give me money for what I have to sell."

Fullalove was silent a minute, then he got a piece of wood and a knife, and said, with an air of resignation:

"I reckon we'll hev to deal."

Need we say that to deal had been his eager desire from the first?

He now began to whittle a peg, and awaited the attack.

"What will you give me, sir?"

"What, money down? And you got nothing to sell but chances. Why, there's an old cuss about, that knows where the island is as well as you do."

"Then of course you will treat with him," said Robert, sadly.

"Darned if I do," said the Yankee. "You are in trouble, and he is not, nor never will be till he dies, and then he'll get it hot I calc'late. He is a thief, and stole my harpoon; you are an honest man, and brought it back. I reckon I'll deal with you and not with that old cuss; not by a jugfull! But it must be on a percentage. You tell me the bearings of that there island, and I'll work it and pay five per cent on the gross."

"Would you mind throwing that piece of wood into the sea, Mr. Fullalove?" said Robert.

"Caen't be done, nohow. I caen't deal without whittlin'."

"You mean you can't take an unfair advantage without it. Come, Mr. Fullalove, let us cut this short. I am, as you say, an honest and most unfortunate man. Sir, I was falsely accused of crime and banished my country. I can prove my innocence now if I can but get home with a great deal of money. So much for *me*. *You* are a member of the vainest and most generous nation in the world."

"Wal, now that's kinder honey and vinegar mixed," said Fullalove; "pretty good for a Britisher, though."

"You are a man of that nation, which in all the agonies and unparalleled expenses of civil war, smarting, too, under anonymous taunts from England, did yet send over a large sum to relieve the distresses of certain poor Englishmen who were indirect victims of that same calamity. The act, the time, the misery relieved, the taunts overlooked, prove your nation superior to all others in generosity. At least my reading, which is very large, affords no parallel to it either in ancient or modern history. Mr. Fullalove, please to recollect that you are a member of that nation, and that I am very unhappy and helpless, and want money to undo cruel wrongs, but have no heart to chaffer much. Take the island and the treasure, and give me half the profits you make. Is not that fair?"

Fullalove wore a rueful countenance.

"Darn the critter," said he, "he'll take the skin off my bones if I don't mind. Fust Britisher ever I met as had the sense to see *that*. T'was rather handsome, warn't it? Wal, human nature is deep; every man you tackle in business larns ye something. What with picking ye out o' the sea, and you giving me back the harpoon the cuss stole, and your face like a young calf,

when you are the cutest fox out, and you giving the great *U*-nited States their due, I'm no more fit to deal than mashed potatoes. Now I cave: it is only for once. Next time don't you try to palaver me. Draw me a map of our island, Britisher, and mark where the Spaniard lies: I tell *you* I know her name, and the year she was lost in: larned that at Lima one day. Kinder startled me, you did, when you showed me the coin out of her. Wal, there's my hand on haelf profits, and if I'm keen, I'm squar'."

Soon after this he led Robert to his cabin, and Robert drew a large map from his models; and Fullalove, being himself an excellent draughtsman, and provided with proper instruments, aided him to finish it.

Next day they sighted Valparaiso, and hove-to outside the port.

All the specimens of insular wealth were put on board the schooner and secreted, for Fullalove's first move was to get a lease of the island from the Chilian government, and it was no part of his plan to trumpet the article he was going to buy.

After a moment's hesitation, he declined to take the seven pounds of silver. He gave as a reason, that having made a bargain which compelled him to go to Valparaiso at once, he did not feel like charging his partner a fancy price for towing his boat thither. At the same time he hinted that after all this, the next customer would find him a very difficult Yankee to get the better of.

With this understanding, he gave Robert a draft for eighty pounds on account of profits: and this enabled him to take a passage for England with all his belongings.

He arrived at Southampton very soon after the events last related, and thence went to London, fully alive to the danger of his position.

He had a friend in his long beard, but he dared not rely on that alone. Like a mole, he worked at night.

CHAPTER LXIII.

Helen asked Arthur Wardlaw why he was so surprised at the prayer-book being brought back. Was it worth twenty pounds to any one except herself?

Arthur looked keenly at her to see whether she intended more than met the ear, and then said that he was surprised at the rapid effect of his advertisement, that was all.

"Now you have got the book," said he, "I do hope you will erase that cruel slander on one whom you mean to honor with your hand."

This proposal made Helen blush, and feel very miserable. Of the obnoxious lines some were written by Robert Penfold, and she had so little of his dear handwriting. "I feel you are right, Arthur," said she; "but you must give me time. They shall meet no eye but mine; and on our wedding-day — of course — all memorials of one —" Tears completed the sentence.

Arthur Wardlaw, raging with jealousy at the absent Penfold as heretofore Penfold had raged at him, heaved a deep sigh and hurried away, while Helen was locking up the prayer-book in her desk. By this means he retained Helen's pity.

He went home directly, mounted to his bedroom, unlocked a safe, and plunged his hand into it. His hand encountered a book; he drew it out with a shiver, and gazed at it with terror and amazement.

It was the prayer-book he had picked up in the square and locked up in that safe. Yet that very prayer-book had been restored to Helen before his eyes, and was now

locked up in her desk. He sat down with the book in his hand, and a great dread came over him.

Hitherto Candor and Credulity only had been opposed to him, but now Cunning had entered the field against him; a master hand was co-operating with Helen.

Yet, strange to say, she seemed unconscious of that co-operation. Had Robert Penfold found his way home by some strange means? Was he watching over her in secret?

He had the woman he loved watched night and day, but no Robert Penfold was detected.

He puzzled his brains night and day, and at last he conceived a plan of deceit which is common enough in the East, where lying is one of the fine arts, but was new in this country, we believe, and we hope to Heaven we shall not be the means of importing it.

An old clerk of his father's, now superannuated and pensioned off, had a son upon the stage in a very mean position. Once a year, however, and of course in the dogdays, he had a kind of benefit at his suburban theatre; that is to say, the manager allowed him to sell tickets, and take half the price of them. He persuaded Arthur to take some, and even to go to the theatre for an hour. The man played a little part, of a pompous sneak, with some approach to Nature. He seemed at home.

Arthur found this man out; visited him at his own place. He was very poor, and mingled pomposity with obsequiousness, so that Arthur felt convinced he was to be bought body and soul, what there was of him.

He sounded him accordingly, and the result was that the man agreed to perform a part for him.

Arthur wrote it, and they rehearsed it together. As to the dialogue, that was so constructed that it could be varied considerably according to the cues, which could be foreseen to a certain extent; but not precisely, since

they were to be given by Helen Rolleston, who was not in the secret.

But, whilst this plot was fermenting, other events happened, with rather a contrary tendency, and these will be more intelligible if we go back to Nancy Rouse's cottage, where indeed we have kept Joseph Wylie in an uncomfortable position a very long time.

Mrs. James, from next door, was at last admitted into Nancy's kitchen, and her first word was, "I suppose you know what I'm come about, ma'am."

"Which it is to return me the sass-pan you borrowed, no doubt," was Nancy's ingenious reply.

"No, ma'am. But I'll send my girl in with it, as soon as she have cleaned it, you may depend."

"Thank ye, I shall be glad to see it again."

"You're not afeard I shall steal it, I hope?"

"La, bless the woman, don't fly out at a body like that. I can't afford to give away my sass-pan."

"Sass-pans is not in my head."

"Nor in your hand neither."

"I'm come about my lodger; a most respectable gentleman, which he have met with an accident. He did but go to put something away in the chimbley, which he is a curious gent, and has travelled a good deal, and learned the foreign customs, when his hand was caught in the brick-work, somehows, and there he is hard and fast."

"I know nothing about it, Mrs. James," said Nancy. "Do you, girl?"

"No," said the mite, with a countenance of polished granite.

"La, bless me!" said Nancy, with a sudden start. "Why, is she talking about the thief as you and I catched putting his hand through the wall into my room, and made him fast again the policeman comes round?"

"Thief?" cried Mrs. James: "no more a thief than

I am. Why, sure you wouldn't ever be so cruel. Oh, dear! — oh, dear! Spite goes a far length. There, take an' kill me, do; and then you'll be easy in your mind. Ah, little my poor father thought as ever I should come down to letting lodgers, and being maltreated this way. I am — "

"Who is a maltreating of ye? Why, you're dreaming. Have a drop o' gin."

"With them as takes the police to my lodger? It would choke me."

"Well, have a drop, and we'll see about it."

"You're very kind, ma'am, I'm sure. Heaven knows I need it. Here's wishing you a good husband; and towards burying all unkindness."

"Which you means drownding of it."

"Ah, you're never at a loss for a word, ma'am, and always in good spirits. But your troubles is to come. *I'm* a widdy. You will let me see what is the matter with my lodger, ma'am?"

"Why not? We'll all go and have a look at him."

Accordingly, the three women and the mite proceeded to the little room; Nancy turned the gas on, and they inspected the imprisoned hand. Mrs. James screamed with dismay, and Nancy asked her dryly whether she was to blame for seizing a hand which had committed a manifest trespass.

"You have got the rest of his body," said she, "but this here hand belongs to me."

"Lord, ma'am, what could he take out of your chimbley, without 'twas a handful of soot? Do pray let me loose him."

"Not till I have said two words to him."

"But how can you? He isn't here to speak to; only a morsel of him."

"I can go into your house and speak to him."

Mrs. James demurred to that; but Nancy stood firm: Mrs. James yielded. Nancy whispered her myrmidons, and, in a few minutes, was standing by the prisoner, a reverend person in dark spectacles, and a gray beard, that created commiseration, or would have done so, but that this stroke of ill-fortune had apparently fallen upon a great philosopher. He had contrived to get a seat under him, and was smoking a pipe with admirable sang-froid.

At sight of Nancy, however, he made a slight motion, as if he would not object to follow his imprisoned hand through the party-wall. It was only for a moment though; the next, he smoked imperturbably.

"Well, sir," said Nancy, "I hopes you are comfortable."

"Thank ye, miss; yes. I am at double sheet anchor."

"Why do you call me miss?"

"I don't know. Because you are so young and pretty."

"That will do. I only wanted to hear the sound of your voice, Joe Wylie." And with the word she snatched his wig off with one hand, and his beard with the other, and revealed his true features to his astonished landlady.

"There, mum," said she, "I wish you joy of your lodger." She tapped the chimney three times with the poker, and telling Mr. Wylie she had a few words to say to him in private, retired for the present. Mrs. James sat down and mourned the wickedness of mankind, the loss of her lodger (who would now go bodily next door instead of sending his hand), and the better days she had by iteration brought herself to believe she had seen.

Wylie soon entered Nancy's house, and her first question was, "The two thousand pounds, how did you get them?"

"No matter how I got them," said Wylie, sulkily. "What have you done with them?"

"Put them away."

"That is all right. I'm blest if I didn't think they were gone forever."

"I wish they had never come. Ill-gotten money is a curse." Then she taxed him with scuttling the Proserpine, and asked him whether that money had not been the bribe. But Joe was obdurate. "I never split on a friend," said he. "And you have nobody to blame but yourself; you wouldn't splice without two thousand pounds. I loved you: and I got it how I could. D'ye think a poor fellow like me can make two thousand pounds in a voyage by hauling on ropes, and tying true lovers' knots in the foretop?

Nancy had her answer ready: but this remembrance pricked her own conscience and paved the way to a reconciliation.

Nancy had no high-flown notions. She loved money, but it must be got without palpable dishonesty; *per contra*, she was not going to denounce her sweetheart, but then again she would not marry him so long as he differed with her about the meaning of the eighth commandment.

This led to many arguments, some of them warm, some affectionate, and so we leave Mr. Wylie under the slow but salutary influence of love and unpretending probity.

He continued to lodge next door. Nancy would only receive him as a visitor. "No," said she, "a little snapping and snarling is good for the health: but I don't care to take the bread out of a neighbo-'s mouth as keeps saying she have seen better days."

CHAPTER LXIV.

Helen had complained to Arthur, of all people, that she was watched and followed; she even asked him whether that was not the act of some enemy. Arthur smiled, and said, "Take my word for it, it is only some foolish admirer of your beauty; he wants to know your habits, in hopes of falling in with you; you had better let me go out with you for the next month or so; that sort of thing will soon die away."

As a necessary consequence of this injudicious revelation, Helen was watched with greater skill and subtlety, and upon a plan well calculated to disarm suspicion: a spy watched the door, and by a signal unintelligible to any but his confederate, whom Helen could not possibly see, set the latter on her track.

They kept this game up unobserved for several days; but learned nothing, for Helen was at a standstill.

At last they got caught, and by a truly feminine stroke of observation.

A showily dressed man peeped into a shop where Helen was buying gloves.

With one glance of her woman's eye she recognized a large breast-pin in the worst possible taste; thence her eye went up and recognized the features of her seedy follower, though he was now dressed up to the nine.

She withdrew her eye directly, completed her purchase, and went home, brooding defence and vengeance.

That evening she dined with a lady who had a large acquaintance with lawyers, and it so happened that Mr. Tollemache and Mr. Hennessy were both of the party.

Now, when these gentlemen saw Helen in full costume, a queen in form as well as face, coroneted with her island pearls, environed with a halo of romance, and courted by women as well as men, they looked up to her with astonishment, and made up to her in a very different style from that in which they had received her visit Tollemache she received coldly; he had defended Robert Penfold feebly, and she hated him for it. Hennessy she received graciously, and remembering Robert's precept, to be supple as a woman, bewitched him. He was good-natured, able, and vain. By eleven o'clock she had enlisted him in her service. When she had conquered him, she said, slyly, "But I ought not to speak of these things to you except through a solicitor."

"That is the general rule," said the learned counsel, "but in this case no dark body must come between me and the sun."

In short he entered into Penfold's case with such well-feigned warmth, to please the beauteous girl, that at last she took him by the horns and consulted.

"I am followed," said she.

"I have no doubt you are; and on a large scale: if there is room for another I should be glad to join the train."

"Ha! ha! I'll save you the trouble. I'll meet you half way. But, to be serious, I am watched, spied, and followed by some enemy to that good friend whose sacred cause we have undertaken. Forgive me for saying 'we.'"

"I am too proud of the companionship to let you off. 'We' is the word."

"Then advise me what to do. I want to retaliate. I want to discover who is watching me, and why. Can you advise me? Will you?"

The counsel reflected a moment, and Helen, who

watched him, remarked the power that suddenly came into his countenance and brow.

"You must watch the spies. I have influence in Scotland Yard, and will get it done for you. If you went there yourself they would cross-examine you and decline to interfere. I'll go myself for you, and put it in a certain light. An able detective will call on you: give him ten guineas, and let him into your views in confidence: then he will work the public machinery for you."

"Oh, Mr. Hennessy, how can I thank you?"

"By succeeding. I hate to fail: and now your cause is mine."

Next day, a man with a hooked nose, a keen black eye, and a solitary foible (mosaic), called on Helen Rolleston, and told her he was to take her instructions. She told him she was watched, and thought it was done to baffle a mission she had undertaken: but, having got so far, she blushed and hesitated.

"The more you tell me, miss, the more use I can be," said Mr. Burt.

Thus encouraged, and also remembering Mr. Hennessy's advice, she gave Mr. Burt, as coldly as she could, an outline of Robert Penfold's case, and of the exertions she had made, and the small result.

Burt listened keenly, and took a note or two, and, when she had done, he told her something in return.

"Miss Rolleston," said he, "I am the officer that arrested Robert Penfold. It cost me a grinder that he knocked out."

"Oh, dear," said Helen, "how unfortunate! Then I fear I cannot reckon on your services."

"Why not, miss? What, do you think I hold spite against a poor fellow for defending himself? Besides, Mr. Penfold wrote me a very proper note. Certainly, for a parson, the gent is a very quick hitter; but he wrote

very square, — said he hoped I would allow for the surprise and the agitation of an innocent man; sent me two guineas, too, and said he would make it twenty, but he was poor as well as unfortunate. That letter has stuck in my gizzard ever since; can't see the color of felony in it. Your felon is never in a fault; and, if he wears a good coat, he isn't given to show fight."

"It was very improper of him to strike you," said Helen, "and very noble of you to forgive it. Make him still more ashamed of it: lay him under a deep obligation."

"If he is innocent, I'll try and prove it," said the detective. He then asked her if she had taken notes. She said she had a diary. He begged to see it. She felt inclined to withhold it, because of the comments; but, remembering that this was womanish, and that Robert's orders to her were to be manly on such occasions, she produced her diary. Mr. Burt read it very carefully, and told her it was a very promising case. "You have done a great deal more than you thought," he said. "*You have netted the fish.*"

CHAPTER LXV.

"I NETTED the fish! What fish?"

"The man who forged the promissory note."

"O Mr. Burt!"

"The same man that forged the newspaper extracts to deceive you, forged the promissory note years ago; and the man who is setting spies on you is the man who forged those extracts; so we are sure to nail him. He is in the net, and very much to your credit. Leave the rest to me. I'll tell you more about it to-morrow. You must order your carriage at one o'clock to-morrow, and drive down to Scotland Yard. Go into the Yard, and you will see me. Follow me without a word. When you go back, the other spies will be so frightened, they will go off to their employer, and so we shall nail him."

Helen complied with these instructions strictly, and then returned home, leaving Mr. Burt to work. She had been home about half an hour, when the servant brought her up a message, saying that a man wanted to speak to her.

"Admit him," said Helen.

"He is dressed very poor, miss."

"Never mind; send him to me."

She was afraid to reject anybody now, lest she might turn her back on information.

A man presented himself in well-worn clothes, with a wash-leather face and close-shaven chin. A little of his forehead was also shaven.

"Madam, my name is Hand."

Helen started.

"I have already had the honor of writing to you."

"Yes, sir," said Helen, eying him with fear and aversion.

"Madam, I am come"—(he hesitated). "I am an unfortunate man. Weighed down by remorse for a thoughtless act that has ruined an innocent man, and nearly cost my worthy employer his life, I come to expiate as far as in me lies. But let me be brief, and hurry over a tale of shame. I was a clerk at Wardlaw's office. A bill-broker, called Adams, was talking to me and my fellow-clerks, and boasting that nobody could take him in with a feigned signature. Bets were laid. Our vanity was irritated by his pretension. It was my fortune to overhear my young master and his friend Robert Penfold speak about a loan of two thousand pounds. In an evil hour I listened to the tempter, and wrote a forged note for that amount. I took it to Mr. Penfold; he presented it to Adams, and it was cashed. I intended, of course, to call next day, and tell Mr. Penfold, and take him to Adams, and restore the money, and get back the note. It was not due for three months. Alas! that very day it fell under suspicion. Mr. Penfold was arrested. My young master was struck down with illness at his friend's guilt, though he never could be quite got to believe it; and I, miserable coward, dared not tell the truth. Ever since that day I have been a miserable man. The other day I came into money, and left Wardlaw's service. But I carry my remorse with me. Madam, I am come to tell the truth. I dare not tell it to Mr. Wardlaw: I think he would kill me. But I will tell it to you, and you can tell it to him; ay, tell it to all the world. Let my shame be as public as his whom I have injured so deeply; but, Heaven knows, unintentionally. I—I—I—"

Mr. Hand sank all in a heap, where he sat, and could say no more.

Helen's flesh crawled at this confession, and at the sight of this reptile, who owned that he had destroyed Robert Penfold in fear and cowardice. For a long time her wrath so overpowered all sense of pity, that she sat trembling; and, if eyes could kill, Mr. Hand would not have outlived his confession.

At last she contrived to speak. She turned her head away not to see the wretch, and said, sternly, —

"Are you prepared to make this statement on paper, if called on?"

Mr. Hand hesitated, but said, "Yes."

"Then write down that Robert Penfold was innocent, and you are ready to prove it whenever you are called upon."

"Write that down?" said Hand.

"Unless your penitence is feigned, you will."

"Sooner than that should be added to my crime, I will avow all."

He then wrote the few lines she required.

"Now your address, that I may know where to find you at a moment's notice."

He then wrote, "J. Hand, 11 Warwick Street, Pimlico."

Helen then dismissed him, and wept bitterly. In that condition she was found by Arthur Wardlaw, who comforted her, and, on hearing her report of Hand's confession, burst out into triumph, and reminded her he had always said Robert Penfold was innocent. "My father," said he, "must yield to this evidence, and we will lay it before the Secretary of State, and get his pardon."

"His pardon! when he is innocent!"

"Oh, that is the form; the only form! The rest must be done by the warm reception of his friends. I, for one, who all these years have maintained his innocence, will be the first to welcome him to my house, an honored guest. What am I saying? Can I? dare I? ought I?

when my wife — Ah! I am more to be pitied than my poor friend is: my friend, my rival. Well, I leave it to you whether he can come into your husband's house."

"Never!"

"But, at least I can send the Springbok out, and bring him home; and that I will do without one day's delay."

"O Arthur!" cried Helen, "you set me an example of unselfishness."

"I do what I can," said Arthur. "I am no saint. I hope for a reward."

Helen sighed. "What shall I do?"

"Have pity on *me!* your faithful lover, and to whom your faith was plighted before ever you saw or knew my unhappy friend. What can I do or suffer more than I have done and suffered for you? My sweet Helen, have pity on me, and be my wife."

"I will, some day."

"Bless you! bless you! One effort more: what day?"

"I can't! I can't! My heart is dead."

"This day fortnight. Let me speak to your father; let him name the day."

As she made no reply, he kissed her hand devotedly, and did speak to her father.

Sir Edward, meaning all for the best, said, "This day fortnight."

CHAPTER LXVI.

The next morning came the first wedding presents from the jubilant bridegroom, who was determined to advance step by step, and give no breathing time.

When Helen saw them laid out by her maid she trembled at the consequences of not giving a plump negative to so brisk a wooer.

The second post brought two letters: one of them from Mrs. Undercliff; the other contained no words, but only a pearl of uncommon size and pear-shaped.

Helen received this at first as another wedding present, and an attempt on Arthur's part to give her a pearl as large as those she had gathered on her dear island. But looking narrowly at the address, she saw it was not written by Arthur; and, presently, she was struck by the likeness of this pearl, in shape, to some of her own. She got out her pearls, laid them side by side, and began to be moved exceedingly. She had one of her instincts, and it set every fibre quivering with excitement. It was some time before she could take her eyes off the pearls, and it was with a trembling hand she opened Mrs. Undercliff's letter.

My dear Young Lady, — A person called here last night and supplied the clew. If you have the courage to know the truth, you have only to come here, and to bring your diary, and all the letters you have received from any person or persons since you landed in England.

I am, yours obediently,

Jane Undercliff.

The courage to know the truth!

This mysterious sentence affected Helen considerably. But her faith in Robert was too great to be shaken. She would not wait for the canonical hour at which young ladies go out, but put on her bonnet directly after breakfast.

Early as she was, a visitor came before she could start, — Mr. Burt, the detective. She received him in the library.

Mr. Burt looked at her dress and her little bag, and said, "I'm very glad I made bold to call so early."

"You have got information of importance to communicate to me?"

"I think so, miss;" and he took out his notebook. "The person you are watched by is Mr. Arthur Wardlaw."

The girl stared at him.

"Both spies report to him twice a day at his house in Russell Square."

"Be careful, Mr. Burt; this is a serious thing to say, and may have serious consequences."

"Well, miss, you told me you wanted to know the truth."

"Of course I want to know the truth."

"Then the truth is that you are watched by order of Mr. Wardlaw."

Burt continued his report.

"A shabby-like man called on you yesterday."

"Yes; it was Mr. Hand, Mr. Wardlaw's clerk. And oh, Mr. Burt, that wretched creature came and confessed the truth. It was he who forged the note, out of sport, and for a bet, and then was too cowardly to own it."

She then detailed Hand's confession.

"His penitence comes too late," said she, with a deep sigh.

"It hasn't come yet," said Burt, dryly. "Of course

my lambs followed the man. He went first to his employer, and then he went home. His name is not Hand. He is not a clerk at all, but a little actor at the Corinthian Saloon. Hand is in America; went three months ago. I ascertained that from another quarter."

"Oh, goodness!" cried Helen; "what a wretched world. I can't see my way a yard for stories."

"How should you, miss? It is clear enough, for all that. Mr. Wardlaw hired this actor to pass for Hand, and tell you a lie that he thought would please you."

Helen put her hand to her brow, and thought; but her candid soul got sadly in the way of her brain.

"Mr. Burt," said she, "will you go with me to Mr. Undercliff, the expert?"

"With pleasure, ma'am; but let me finish my report. Last night there was something new. Your house was watched by six persons. Two were Wardlaw's, three were Burt's; but the sixth man was there on his own hook, and my men could not make him out at all; but they think one of Wardlaw's men knew him; for he went off to Russell Square like the wind, and brought Mr. Wardlaw here in disguise. Now, miss, that is all; and shall I call a cab, and we'll hear Undercliff's tale?"

The cab was called, and they went to Undercliff. On the way Helen brooded; but the detective eyed every man and everything on the road with the utmost keenness.

Edward Undercliff was at work at lithographing. He received Helen cordially, nodded to Burt, and said she could not have a better assistant.

He then laid his fac-simile of the forged note on the table with John Wardlaw's genuine writing and Penfold's indorsement.

"Look at that, Mr. Burt."

Burt inspected the papers keenly.

"You know, Burt, I swore at Robert Penfold's trial that he never wrote that forged note."

"I remember," said Burt.

"The other day, this lady intrusted me to discover, if I could, who did write the forged note. But, unfortunately, the materials she gave me were not sufficient. But, last night, a young man dropped from the clouds, that I made sure was an agent of yours, Miss Rolleston. Under that impression I was rather unguarded, and I let him know how far we had got, and could get no farther. 'I think I can help you,' says this young man, and puts a letter on the table. Well, Mr. Burt, a glance at that letter was enough for me. It was written by the man who forged the note."

"A letter!" said Helen.

"Yes. I'll put the letter by the side of the forged note; and, if you have any eye for writing at all, you'll see at once that one hand wrote the forged note and this letter. I am also prepared to swear that the letters signed Hand are forgeries by the same person."

He then coolly put upon the table the letter from Arthur Wardlaw that Helen had received on board the Proserpine, and was proceeding to point out the many points of resemblance between the letter and the document, whon he was interrupted by a scream from Helen.

"Ah!" she cried. "He is here. Only one man in the world could have brought that letter. I left it on the island. Robert is here; he gave you that letter."

"You are right," said the expert, "and what a fool I must be. I have no eye except for handwriting. He had a beard, and such a beard!"

"It is Robert!" cried Helen, in raptures. "He is come just in time."

"In time to be arrested," said Burt. "Why, his time is not out. He'll get into a trouble again."

"Oh, Heaven forbid!" cried Helen, and turned so faint, she had to be laid back on a chair, and salts applied to her nostrils.

She soon came to, and cried and trembled, but prepared to defend her Robert with all a woman's wit.

Burt and Undercliff were conversing in a low voice, and Burt was saying he felt sure Wardlaw's spies had detected Robert Penfold, and that Robert would be arrested and put into prison as a runaway convict.

"Go to Scotland Yard this minute, Mr. Burt," said Helen, eagerly.

"What for?"

"Why, you must take the commission to arrest him. You are our friend."

Burt slapped his thigh with delight.

"That is first-rate, miss," said he; "I'll take the real felon first, you may depend. Now, Mr. Undercliff, write your report, and hand it to Miss Helen, with facsimiles. It will do no harm if you make a declaration to the same effect before a magistrate. You, Miss Rolleston, keep yourself disengaged, and please don't go out. You will very likely hear from me again to-day."

He drove off, and Helen, though still greatly agitated by Robert's danger, and the sense of his presence, now sat down, trembling a little, and compared Arthur's letter with the forged document. The effect of this comparison was irresistible. The expert, however, asked her for some letter of Arthur's that had never passed through Robert Penfold's hands. She gave him the short note in which he used the very words, Robert Penfold. He said he would make that note the basis of his report.

While he was writing it, Mrs. Undercliff came in, and Helen told her all. She said, "I came to the same con-

clusion long ago; but when you said he was to be your husband —"

"Ah," said Helen, "we women are poor creatures; we can always find some reason for running away from the truth. Now explain about the prayer-book."

"Well, miss, I felt sure he would steal it, so I made Ned produce a fac-simile. And he did steal it. What you got back was your mother's prayer-book. Of course I took care of that."

"Oh, Mrs. Undercliff," cried Helen, "do let me kiss you."

Then they had a nice little cry together, and, by the time they had done, the report was ready in duplicate.

"I'll declare this before a magistrate," said the expert, "and then I'll send it to you."

At four o'clock of this eventful day, Helen got a message from Burt to say that he had orders to arrest Robert Penfold, and that she must wear a mask and ask Mr. Wardlaw to meet her at old Mr. Penfold's at nine o'clock. But she herself must be there at half-past eight, without fail, and bring Undercliff's declaration and report with her, and the prayer-book, etc.

Accordingly, Helen went down to old Mr. Penfold's at half-past eight, and was received by Nancy Rouse, and ushered into Mr. Penfold's room; that is to say, Nancy held the door open, and, on her entering the room, shut it sharply and ran downstairs.

Helen entered the room; a man rose directly and came to her; but it was not Michael Penfold — it was Robert. A faint scream, a heavenly sigh, and her head was on his shoulder, and her arm round his neck, and both their hearts panting as they gazed, and then clung to each other, and then gazed again with love unutterable. After a while they got sufficient composure to sit down hand in hand and compare notes. And Helen showed him

their weapons of defence, the prayer-book, the expert's report, etc.

A discreet tap was heard at the door. It was Nancy Rouse. On being invited to enter, she came in, and said, "Oh, Miss Helen, I've got a penitent outside, which he done it for love of me, and now he'll make a clean breast, and the fault was partly mine. Come in, Joe, and speak for yourself."

On this, Joe Wylie came in, hanging his head piteously.

"She is right, sir," said he; "I'm come to ask your pardon and the lady's. Not as I ever meant you any harm; but to destroy the ship, it was a bad act, and I've never throve since. Nance, she have got the money. I'll give it back to the underwriters; and, if you and the lady will forgive a poor fellow that was tempted with love and money, why, I'll stand to the truth for you, though it's a bitter pill."

"I forgive you," said Robert; "and I accept your offer to serve me."

"And so do I," said Helen. "Indeed, it is not us you have wronged. But, oh, I *am* glad, for Nancy's sake, that you repent."

"Miss, I'll go through fire and water for you," said Wylie, lifting up his head.

Here old Michael came in to say that Arthur Wardlaw was at the door, with a policeman.

"Show him in," said Robert.

"Oh no, Robert!" said Helen. "He fills me with horror."

"Show him in," said Robert, gently. "Sit down, all of you."

Now Burt had not told Arthur who was in the house, so he came, rather uneasy in his mind, but still expecting only to see Helen.

Robert Penfold told Helen to face the door, and the rest to sit back; and this arrangement had not been effected one second, when Arthur came in, with a lover's look, and, taking two steps into the room, saw the three men waiting to receive him. At sight of Penfold, he started, and turned pale as ashes; but, recovering himself, said, —

"My dearest Helen, this is indeed an unexpected pleasure. You will reconcile me to one, whose worth and innocence I never doubted, and tell him I have had some little hand in clearing him."

His effrontery was received in dead silence. This struck cold to his bones, and, being naturally weak, he got violent. He said, —

"Allow me to send a message to my servant."

He then tore a leaf out of his memorandum-book, wrote on it: — "Robert Penfold is here; arrest him directly, and take him away." And, enclosing this in an envelope, sent it out to Burt by Nancy.

Helen seated herself quietly, and said, —

"Mr. Wardlaw, when did Mr. Hand go to America?"

Arthur stammered out, "I don't know the exact date."

"Two or three months ago?"

"Yes."

"Then the person you sent me to tell me that falsehood was not Mr. Hand?"

"I sent nobody."

"Oh, for shame! for shame! Why have you set spies? Why did you make away with my prayer-book; or what you thought was my prayer-book? Here *is* my prayer-book, that proves you had the Proserpine destroyed; and I should have lost my life but for another, whom you had done your best to destroy. Look Robert Penfold in the face if you can."

Arthur's eyes began to waver.

"I can," said he. "I never wronged him. I always lamented his misfortune."

"You were not the cause?"

"Never!—so help me Heaven!"

"Monster!" said Helen, turning away in contempt and horror."

"Oh, that is it, is it?" said Arthur, wildly. "You break faith with me for *him?* You insult me for *him?* I must bear anything from you, for I love you; but, at least, I will sweep *him* out of the path."

He ran to the door, opened it, and there was Burt, listening.

"Are you an officer?"

"Yes."

"Then arrest that man this moment: he is Robert Penfold, a convict returned before his time."

Burt came into the room, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket.

"Well, sir," said Burt to Robert, "I know you are a quick hitter. Don't let us have a row over it this time. If you have got anything to say, say it quiet and comfortable."

"I will go with you on one condition," said Robert. "You must take the felon as well as the martyr. This is the felon;" and he laid his hand on Arthur's shoulder, who cowered under the touch at first, but soon began to act violent indignation.

"Take the ruffian away at once," he cried.

"What! before I hear what he has got to say?"

"Would you listen to him against a merchant of the City of London, a man of unblemished reputation?"

"Well, sir, you see we have got a hint that you were concerned in scuttling a ship: and that is a felony. So I think I'll just hear what he has got to say. You need not *fear* any man's tongue if you are innocent."

"Sit down, if you please, and examine these documents," said Robert Penfold. "As to the scuttling of the ship, here is the deposition of two seamen, taken on their death-bed, and witnessed by Miss Rolleston and myself."

"And that book he tried to steal," said Helen.

Robert continued, "And here is Undercliff's facsimile of the forged note. Here are specimens of Arthur Wardlaw's handwriting, and here is Undercliff's report."

The detective ran his eye hastily over the report, which we slightly condense.

On comparing the forged note with genuine specimens of John Wardlaw's handwriting, no less than twelve deviations from his habits of writing strike the eye: and every one of these twelve deviations is a deviation into a habit of Arthur Wardlaw, which is an amount of demonstration rarely attained in cases of forgery.

1. *The capital L.* — Compare in London (forged note) with the same letter in London in Wardlaw's letter.

2. *The capital D.* — Compare this letter in *Date* with the same letter in *Dearest.*

3. *The capital T.* — Compare it in *Two* and *Tollemache.*

4. The word *To;* see *To pay,* in forged note and third line of letter.

5. Small *o* formed with a loop in the up-stroke.

6. The manner of finishing the letter *v.*

7. Ditto the letter *w.*

8. The imperfect formation of the small *a.* This and the looped *o* run through the forged note and Arthur Wardlaw's letter, and are habits entirely foreign to the style of John Wardlaw.

9. See the *th* in connection.

10. Ditto the *of* in connection.

11. The incautious use of the Greek ε. John Wardlaw

(The Forged Note.)

£2000, 0, 0 London, February 10th 1864

Three Months after Date, I promise to pay Robert Penfold or Order, the Sum of Two Thousand Pounds, Value received.

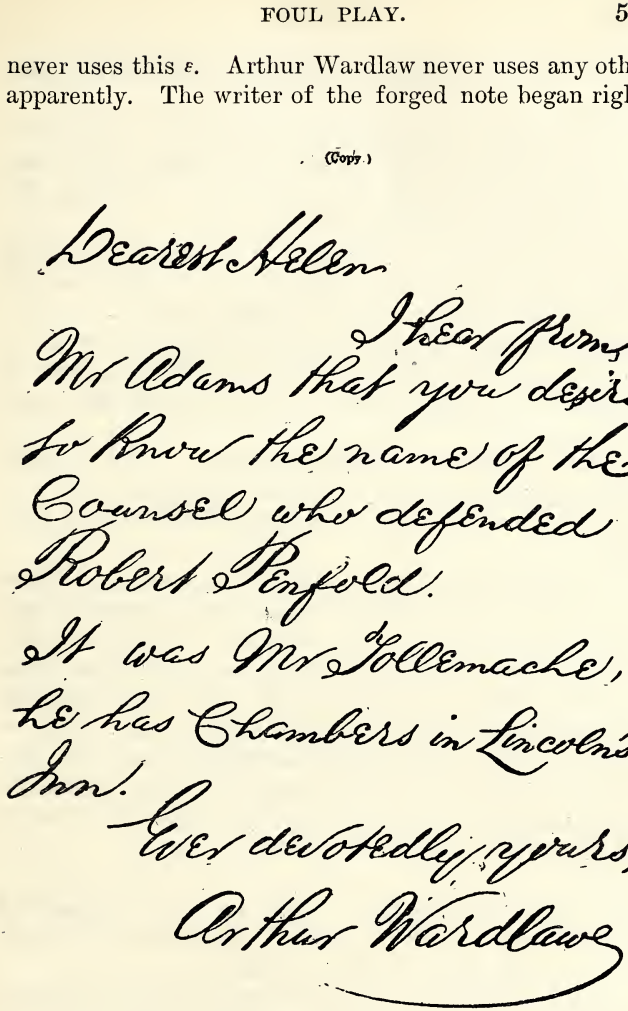
John Wardlaw

(The genuine handwriting of John Wardlaw.

I promise to pay One Thousand Pounds

John Wardlaw

never uses this ε. Arthur Wardlaw never uses any other apparently. The writer of the forged note began right,


(Copy.)

Dearest Nellen

I hear from Mr Adams that you desire to know the name of the Counsel who defended Robert Penfold.

It was Mr Tollemache, he has Chambers in Lincoln's Inn.

Ever devotedly yours,

Arthur Wardlaw

but at the word Robert Penfold glided insensibly into his Greek ε, and maintained it to the end of the forgery.

This looks as if he was in the habit of writing those two words.

12. Compare the words Robert Penfold in the forged document with the same words in the letter. The similarity is so striking, that, on these two words alone, the writer could be identified beyond a doubt.

13. Great pains were taken with the signature, and it is like John Wardlaw's writing on the surface; but go below the surface and it is all Arthur Wardlaw.

The looped *o*, the small *r*, the *l* dropping below the *d*, the open *a*, are all Arthur Wardlaw's. The open loop of the final *w* is a still bolder deviation into A. W.'s own hand.

The final flourish is a curious mistake. It is executed with skill and freedom; but the writer has made the lower line the thick one. Yet John Wardlaw never does this.

How was the deviation caused? Examine the final flourish in Arthur Wardlaw's signature. It contains one stroke only; but then that stroke is a thick one. He thought he had only to prolong his own stroke and bring it round. He did this extremely well, but missed the deeper characteristic, the thick upper stroke. This is proof of a high character; and altogether I am quite prepared to testify upon oath that the writer of the letter to Miss Rolleston, who signs himself Arthur Wardlaw is the person who forged the promissory note.

To enable the reader to follow all this we reproduce the materials of Mr. Undercliff's judgment. To these twelve proofs one more was now added.

Arthur Wardlaw rose, and with his knees knocking together, said, "Don't arrest him, Burt; let him go."

"Don't let *him* go," cried old Penfold. "A villain! I have got the number of the notes from Benson. I can

prove he bribed this poor man to destroy the ship. Don't let him go. He has ruined my poor boy."

At this Arthur Wardlaw began to shriek for mercy.

"O Mr. Penfold," said he, "you are a father, and hate me. But think of my father. I'll say anything, do anything. I'll clear Robert Penfold at my own expense. I have lost *her*. She loathes me now. Have mercy on me, and let me leave the country."

He cringed and crawled so that he disarmed anger, and substituted contempt.

"Ay," said Burt. "He don't hit like you, Mr. Penfold; this is a chap that ought to have been in Newgate long ago. But take my advice; make him clear you on paper and then let him go. I'll go down-stairs awhile. I mustn't take part in compounding a felony."

"Oh, yes, Robert," said Helen; "for his father's sake."

"Very well," said Robert. "Now then, reptile, take the pen and write in your own hand, if you can."

He took the pen and wrote to dictation, —

"I, Arthur Wardlaw, confess that I forged the promissory note for two thousand pounds, and sent it to Robert Penfold, and that fourteen hundred pounds of it was to be for my own use, and to pay my Oxford debts. And I confess that I bribed Wylie to scuttle the ship Proserpine in order to cheat the underwriters."

Penfold then turned to Wylie and asked him the true motive of this fraud.

"Why, the gold was aboard the Shannon," said Wylie; "I played hanky-panky with the metals in White's store."

"Put that down," said Penfold. "Now go on."

"Make a clean breast," said Wylie. "I have. Say as how you cooked the Proserpine's log, and forged Hiram Hudson's writing."

"And the newspaper extracts you sent me," said Helen, "and the letters from Mr. Hand."

Arthur groaned. "Must I tell all that?" said he.

"Every word, or be indicted," said Robert Penfold sternly.

He wrote it all down, and then sat staring stupidly.

And the next thing was, he gave a loud shriek and fell on the floor in a fit.

They sprinkled water over him, and Burt conveyed him home in a cab, advising him to leave the country, at the same time promising him not to exasperate those he had wronged so deeply, but rather to moderate them, if required. Then he gave Burt fifty guineas.

Robert Penfold, at Helen's request, went with her to Mr. Hennessy, and with the proofs of Arthur's guilt and Robert's innocence; and he undertook that the matter should go in proper form before the Secretary of State. But, somehow, it transpired that the Proserpine had been scuttled, and several of the underwriters wrote to the Wardlaws to threaten proceedings. Wardlaw senior returned but one answer to these gentlemen: "Bring your proofs to me at my place of business next Monday at twelve, and let me judge the case, before you go elsewhere."

"That is high and mighty," said one or two; but they conferred and agreed to these terms, so high stood the old merchant's name.

They came; they were received with stiff courtesy. The deposition of Cooper and Welch was produced, and Wylie, kept up to the mark by Nancy, told the truth, and laid his two thousand pounds intact down on the table.

"Now that is off my stomach," said he, "and I'm a man again."

"Ay, and I'll marry you next week," said Nancy.

"Well, gentlemen," said old Wardlaw, "my course seems very clear. I will undo the whole transaction, and return you your money less the premiums, but plus five per cent interest."

And this he did on the spot, for the firm was richer than ever.

When they were gone, Robert Penfold came in, and said, —

"I hear, sir, you devote this day to repairing the wrongs done by your firm. What can you do for me?"

He laid a copy of Arthur's confession before him.

The old man winced a moment where he sat, and the iron passed through his soul.

It was a long time before he could speak. At last he said, —

"This wrong is irreparable, I fear."

Robert said nothing. Sore as his own heart was, he was not the one to strike a grand old man, struggling so bravely against dishonor.

Wardlaw senior touched his hand-bell.

"Request Mr. Penfold to step this way."

Michael Penfold came.

"Gentlemen," said the old merchant, "the house of Wardlaw exists no more. It was built on honesty, and cannot survive a fraud. Wardlaw and Son were partners at will. I had decided to dissolve that partnership, wind up the accounts, and put up the shutters. But now, if you like, I will value the effects, and hand the business over to Penfold and Son, on easy terms. Robert Penfold has been accused of forging John Wardlaw's name; to prove this was a calumny, I put Penfold over my door instead of Wardlaw. The City of London will understand that, gentlemen, believe me."

"Mr. Wardlaw," said Robert, "you are a just, a noble —"

He could say no more.

"Ah, sir," said Michael, "if the young gentleman had only been like you."

"Mention his name no more to me. His crime and his punishment have killed me."

"Oh!" said Robert hastily, "he shall not be punished for your sake."

"Not be punished? It is not in your hands to decide. God has punished him. He is insane."

"Good heavens!"

"Quite mad; quite mad. Gentlemen, I can no longer support this interview. Send me your solicitor's address; the deeds shall be prepared. I wish the new firm success. Probity is the road to it. Good-day."

He wound up the affairs, had his name and Arthur's painted out at his own expense, and directed the painters to paint the Penfolds' in at theirs; went home to Elmtrees, and died in three days. He died lamented and honored, and Robert Penfold was much affected. He got it into his head that he had killed him with Arthur's confession, putting it before him so suddenly.

"I have forgotten who said 'Vengeance is mine,'" said Robert Penfold.

The merchant priest left the office to be conducted by his father; he used the credit of the new firm to purchase a living in the Vale of Kent, and thither he retired; grateful to Providence, but not easy in his conscience. He now accused himself of having often distrusted God, and seen his fellow-creatures in too dark a light. He turned towards religion and the care of souls.

Past suffering enlightens a man, and makes him tender: and people soon began to walk and drive considerable distances to hear the new vicar. He had a lake with a new peninsula, the shape of which he altered, at a great expense, as soon as he came there.

He wrote to Helen every day, and she to him. Neither could do anything *con amore* till the post came in.

One afternoon, as he was preaching with great unction, he saw a long puritanical face looking up at him with a droll expression of amazement and half irony. The stranger called on him, and began at once.

"Wal, parson, you are a buster, you air. You ginn it us hot, *you* did. I'm darned if I ain't kinder ashamed to talk of this world's goods to a saint upon airth like you. But I never knowed a parson yet as couldn't collar the dollars."

After this preamble he announced that he had got a lease of the island from Chili, dug a lot of silver plate out of the galleon, sold ten tons of choice coral, and a ship-load of cassia and cocoa-nuts. He had then disposed of his lease to a Californian company for a large sum. And his partner's share of net profits came to £17,247 13*s.* 3½*d.*, which sum he had paid to Michael for Robert Penfold, in drafts on Baring, at thirty days after sight.

Robert shook his hand, and thanked him sincerely for his ability and probity. He stayed that night at the vicarage, and by that means fell in with another acquaintance. General Rolleston and his daughter drove down to see the parsonage. Helen wanted to surprise Robert; and, as often happens, she surprised herself. She made him show her everything; and so he took her on to his peninsula. Lo! the edges of it had been cut and altered, so that it presented a miniature copy of Godsend Island.

As soon as she saw this, Helen turned round with a sudden cry of love, —

"Oh, Robert!" and the lovers were in each other's arms.

"What could any other man ever be to me?"

"And what could any other woman ever be to me?"

They knew that before. But this miniature island made them speak out and say it. The wedding day was fixed before she left.

Her Majesty pardoned this scholar, hero, and worthy, the crime he had never committed.

Nancy Rouse took the penitent Wylie without the two thousand pounds. But old Penfold, who knew the whole story, lent the money at three per cent; so the Wylies pay a ground rent of sixty pounds a year for a property which, by Mrs. Wylie's industry and judgment, is worth at least four hundred pounds. She pays this very cheerfully, and appeals to Joe whether that is not better than the other way.

"Why, Joe," says she, "to a woman like me, that's a-foot all day, 'tis worth sixty pounds a year to be a good sleeper; and I shouldn't be that if I had wronged my neighbor."

Arthur Wardlaw is in a private lunatic asylum, and is taken great care of. In his lucid intervals, he suffers horrible distress of mind; but, though sad to see, these agonies furnish the one hope of his ultimate recovery. When not troubled by these returns of reason, he is contented enough. His favorite employment is to get Mr. Undercliff's fac-similes, and to write love-letters to Helen Rolleston, which are duly deposited in the post-office *of the establishment.* These letters are in the handwriting of Charles I., Paoli, Lord Bacon, Alexander Pope, Lord Chesterfield, Nelson, Lord Shaftesbury, Addison, the late Duke of Wellington, and so on; and, strange to say, the Greek ε never appears in any of them. They are admirably like, though of course the matter is not always equally consistent with the characters of those personages.

Helen Rolleston married Robert Penfold. On the wedding day, the presents were laid out, and, amongst them, there was a silver box encrusted with coral.

Female curiosity demanded that this box should be opened. Helen objected; but her bridesmaids rebelled; the whole company sided with them, and Robert smiled a careless assent.

A blacksmith and carpenter were both enlisted, and with infinite difficulty the poor box was riven open.

Inside was another box, locked, but with no key. That was opened with comparative ease, and then handed to the bride. It contained nothing but papal indulgences and rough stones, and fair throats were opened in some disappointment.

A lady, however, of more experience, examined the contents, and said that, in her opinion, many of them were uncut gems of great price; there were certainly a quantity of jaspers and blood-stones, and others of no value at all. "But look at these two pearl-shaped diamonds," said she; "why, they are a little fortune; and, oh!"

The stone that struck this fair creature dumb was a rough ruby as big as a blackbird's egg, and of amazing depth and fire.

"No lady in England," said she, "has such a ruby to compare with this."

The information proved correct. The box furnished Helen with diamonds and emeralds of great thickness and quality. But the huge ruby placed her on a level with sovereigns. She wears it now and then in London, but not often. It attracts too much attention, blazing on her fair forehead like a star, and eclipses everything.

Well, what her ruby is amongst stones, she is amongst wives. And he is worthy of her.

Through much suffering, injustice, danger, and trouble, they have passed to health, happiness, and peace, and that entire union of two noble hearts, in loyal friendship and wedded love, which is the truest bliss this earth affords.

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE
NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH.

CONTENTS.

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Clouds and Sunshine	5
II.	The Bloomer	99
III.	Art: A Dramatic Tale	150

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH.

I.

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

CHAPTER I.

It is the London season: come into the country! It is hot, and dusty, and muddy here; and this opening of all the drains, which is to bridle all the disorders by and by, poisons us dead meanwhile, O Board of Health! Come into the country!

In Oxfordshire, about two miles from the Thames, and on the skirts of the beech forest that lies between Wallingford and Henley, stands an irregular farmhouse; it looks like two houses forced to pass for one; for one part of it is all gables, and tile, and chimney corners, and antiquity; the other is square, slated, and of the newest cut outside and in. The whole occupies one entire side of its own farmyard, being separated from the straw only by a small rubicon of gravel and a green railing; though at its back, out of the general view, is a pretty garden.

In this farmhouse and its neighborhood the events of my humble story passed a very few years ago.

Mrs. Mayfield, proprietor of the farm, had built the new part of the house for herself, though she did little more than sleep in it. In the antique part lived her cousin, old farmer Hathorn, with his wife and his son Robert. Hathorn was himself proprietor of a little land two miles off, but farmed Mrs. Mayfield's acres upon some friendly agreement, which they contrived to understand, but few else could, least of all a shrewd lawyer.

The truth is, the inmates, like the house, were a little behind their age: they had no relations that were not contained within these four walls, and the feeling and tie of blood was very strong between them all.

The Hathorns had one son, Robert, a character; he was silent, and passed with some for sulky; but he was not sulky, only reserved and thoughtful; he was, perhaps, a little more devoid of all levity than becomes a young man. He had great force and weight of character; you might see that in his brow and his steady manner free from flourishes. With the Hathorns lived Mr. Casenower, a retired London tradesman. This gentleman had been bought out of a London firm for his scientific way of viewing things: they had lost such lots of money by it.

He had come to the Hathorns for a month, and had now been with them a year, with no intention on either side of parting yet awhile. This good accord did not prevent a perpetual strife of opinions between Casenower and old Hathorn. Casenower, the science-bitten, had read all the books chemists wrote on agriculture, and permitted himself to believe every word. Hathorn read nothing on agriculture but the sheep, the soil, the markets, and the clouds, etc., and sometimes read them wrong, but not so very often.

Rose Mayfield was a young widow, fresh, free, high-

spirited, and jovial; she was fond of company, and its life and soul wherever she was. She loved flirtation, and she loved work; and when she could not combine them she would take them by turns; she would leave the farm every now and then, go to a friend at Oxford, Reading, or Abingdon, and flirt like wild-fire for a fortnight; then she would return to the farm, and men, boys, horses, and work would seem to go more lively before she had been back an hour.

Mrs. Mayfield was a grazier. Though she abandoned her arable land to her cousin's care, she divided with him her grass acres, and bred cattle, and churned butter, and made cheeses, and showed a working arm bare till dinner-time (one o'clock) six days in the week.

This little farmhouse then held a healthy, happy party; but one was not quite content. Parents are matrimonial schemers; they cannot help it; it's no use talking. Old Hathorn wanted Rose Mayfield to marry his son Robert, and so make all sure. The farmer was too wise to be always tormenting the pair to come together, but he secretly worked towards that end without being seen through by them.

Their ages were much the same; and finer specimens of rustic stature and beauty in either sex were not to be seen for miles. But their dispositions were so different that when upon a kind word or a civility passing between them, old Hathorn used to look at Mrs. Hathorn, Mrs. Hathorn used to shake her head, as much as to say, "May be, but I doubt it."

One thing the farmer built on was this: that though Mrs. Mayfield was a coquette, none of her beaux followed her to the farm. "She won't have them here," argued Hathorn, "and that shows she has a respect for Robert at bottom."

The good farmer's security was shaken by a little cir-

cumstance. Bix Farm, that lay but a mile from our ground, was to let, and in course of time was taken by a stranger from Berkshire. Coming into a farm is a business of several months; but the new tenant, a gay, dashing young fellow, came one day to look over his new farm; and, to Hathorn's surprise, called on him, and inquired for Mrs. Mayfield. At sight of the newcomer, that lady colored up to the eyes, and introduced him to her cousin as Mr. Hickman. The name, coupled with her manner, struck Hathorn, but he said nothing to Rose. He asked his wife who this Hickman was. "He is a stranger to me," was the reply, "ask Rose; I hear he was her beau out Abingdon way."

Here was a new feature. The good farmer became very uneasy; but country folks have plenty of tact. He said little — he only warned Robert, who did not seem dismayed by the intelligence, and held himself on his guard.

That same evening the whole family party were seated together towards sundown, in Hathorn's dining-room — the farmer smoking a clay pipe, Mrs. Hathorn sewing, Mrs. Mayfield going in and out making business; but Robert was painfully reading some old deeds he had got from Mrs. Mayfield the week before. This had been the young man's occupation for several evenings, and Mrs. Mayfield had shrugged her shoulders at him and his deeds more than once.

On the present occasion, finding the room silent and reposeful, a state of things she abhorred, she said to Mrs. Hathorn, in a confidential whisper, so bell-like that they all heard it, as she meant them, "Has your Robert any thoughts of turning lawyer at present?"

The question was put so demurely that the old people smiled and did not answer, but looked towards Robert to answer. The said Robert smiled, and went on studying the parchment.

"He doesn't make us much the wiser, though; does he?" continued Mrs. Mayfield. "Silence!" cried the tormentor, the next moment, "he is going to say something. He is only waiting till the sun goes down."

"He is only waiting till he has got something to say," replied Robert, in his quiet way.

"Ah!" was the reply; "that is a trick you have got. I say, Jane, if I was to wait for that, what would become of the house?"

"It would not be so gay as it is, I dare say, Rose."

"And that would be a pity, you know. Well, Bob, when do you look to have something to say? to-morrow night — if the weather holds?"

"I think I shall have something to say as soon as I have read this through." He examined the last leaf — then laid it down. "I have something to say."

Mrs. Hathorn laid down her work.

"Cousin Mayfield," said Robert, "what do you think of Drayton Farm?"

Cousin Mayfield, who had been all expectation, burst into a fit of laughter that rang through the room like a little peal of bells. Mrs. Hathorn looked vexed, and Robert colored for a moment; but he resumed coolly: "Why, it is two hundred acres, mostly good soil, and it marches with your up-hill land. Squire Phillips, that has just got it, counts it the cream of his estate."

"And what have I to do with Squire Phillips and Drayton?"

"Why, this, Rose. I think Drayton belongs to you."

"Nonsense — is the boy mad? Why, Squire Phillips got it along with Hurley, and Norton, and all the Lydalls' farms. Of course they are all mine by right of blood, if every one had their own; but they were all willed away from us fifty years ago. Who doesn't know that? No; Squire Phillips is rooted there too fast for us to take him up."

"It does not belong to Squire Phillips," was the cool reply.

"To whom, then?"

"To you, Rose; or if not to you, to father yonder — but, unless I am much mistaken, it belongs to you. I am no great discourser," continued Robert; "so I have written it down to the best of my ability here. I wish you would look at this paper, and you might read it over to father and mother, if you will be so good: I am going my rounds" — and out strolled Mr. Robert, to see that every cow was foddered, and every pig had his share of the trough.

Mrs. Mayfield took Robert's paper, and read what he had written — some score of little dry sentences, each of them a link in a chain of fact — and this was the general result. Fifty years ago Mrs. Mayfield's father's father had broken off all connection with his son, and driven him out of his house and disinherited him, and adopted in his stead the father of Squire Phillips. The disinherited, being supplied with money by his mother, had got on in the world, and consoled himself for the loss of his father's farms by buying one or two of his own. He died before his father, and bequeathed all he possessed to his daughter Rose. At last the old fellow died at an immense age, and under his will Squire Phillips took all his little estates: but here came in Robert's discovery. Of those four little estates, one had come into the old fellow's hands from his wife's father, and through his wife, and a strict settlement, drawn so long ago that all except the old fellow who meant to cheat it, had forgotten it, secured the Drayton estate, after his parents' death, to Rose Mayfield's father, who by his will had unconsciously transferred it to Rose.

This, which looks clear, had been patiently disen-

A YOUNG WOMAN AND A VERY OLD MAN.

tangled from a mass of idle words by Robert Hathorn, and the family began to fall gradually into his opinion. The result was, Mrs. Mayfield went to law with Squire Phillips, and the old farmer's hopes revived; for he thought, and with reason, that all this must be another link between Robert and Rose — and so the months glided on. The fate of Drayton was soon to be tried at the assizes. Mr. Hickman came over now and then, preparatory to settling on Bix. Mrs. Mayfield made no secret that she found him "very good company" — that was her phrase — and he courted her openly. Another month brought the great event of the agricultural year, "the harvest." This part of Oxfordshire can seldom get in its harvest without the assistance of some strange hands, and Robert agreed with three Irishmen and two Hampshire lads the afternoon before the wheat harvest. "With these and our own people we shall do well enough, father," said he.

Just before the sun set, Mrs. Hathorn was seated outside her own door with her work, when two people came through the farmyard to speak to her: a young woman and a very old man. The former stood a little in the rear; and the old man came up to Mrs. Hathorn, and, taking off his hat, begged for employment in the fields.

"Our number is made up, old man," was the answer.

The old man's head drooped; but he found courage to say, "One more or less won't matter much to you, and it is the bread of life to us."

"Poor old man," said Mrs. Hathorn, "you are too old for harvest work, I doubt."

"No such thing, dame," said the old man, testily.

"What is it, mother?" cried Robert from the barn.

"An old man and his daughter come for harvest work. They beg hard for it, Robert."

"Give them their supper, mother, and let them go."

"I will, Robert; no doubt the poor things are hungry and weary and all;" and she put down her work to go to the kitchen, but the old man stopped her.

"We are here for work, not for charity," said he; "and won't take anything we don't earn."

Mrs. Hathorn looked surprised, and a little affronted. The girl stepped nearer.

"No need to speak so sharp, grandfather," said she, in a clear, cold, but winning voice; "charity is not so common. We thank you, dame. He is an old soldier, and prouder than becomes the like of us. Good-even, and good luck to your harvest!"

They turned to go.

"Stop, girl!" said Mrs. Hathorn. "Robert," cried she, "I wish you would come here."

Robert put on his coat and came up.

"It is an old soldier, Robert; and they seem decent folk, the pair of them."

"An old soldier?" said Robert, looking with some interest at the old man, who, though stiff in the joints, was very erect.

"Ay, young man," said the other boldly, "when I was your age I fought for the land; and now, you see, I must not work upon it!"

Robert looked at his mother.

"Come, Robert," said she, "we may all live to be old, if it pleases God."

"Well," said Robert, "it seems hard to refuse an old soldier; but he is very old, and the young woman looks delicate; I am sure I don't know how to bargain with them."

"Count our two sickles as one, sir," said the girl calmly.

"So be it," said Robert; "anyway, we will give you a trial:" and he returned to his work. And Corporal

Patrick, for that was the old soldier's name, no longer refused the homely supper that was offered him, since he could work it out in the morning.

The next morning at six o'clock the men and women were all in the wheat: Robert Hathorn at the head of them, for Robert was one of the best reapers in the country-side.

Many a sly jest passed at the expense of Patrick and his granddaughter Rachael. The old man often answered, but Rachael hardly ever. At the close of the day they drew apart from all the rest, and seemed content when they were alone together.

In the course of a day or two the reapers began to observe that Rachael was very handsome; and then she became the object of much coarse admiration. Rachael was as little affected by this as by their satire. She evaded it with a cold contempt which left little more to be said; and then her rustic admirers took part with the women against her.

Rachael was pale, and perhaps this was one reason why her beauty did not strike the eye all at once; but when you came to know her face, she was beautiful. Her long eyelashes were heavenly; her eye was full of soul; her features were refined, and her skin was white and transparent, and a slight blush came readily to it, at which moment she was lovely. It must be owned she did not appear to advantage in the field among the reapers; for there she seemed to feel at war; and her natural dignity degenerated into a certain doggedness. After awhile Mrs. Hathorn took a fancy to her; and when she was beside this good, motherly creature, her asperity seemed to soften down, and her coldness turned to a not unamiable pensiveness.

Mrs. Hathorn said one evening to Robert, "Robert, look at that girl. Do try and find out what is the mat-

ter with her. She is a good girl as ever broke bread; but she breaks my heart to look at her, she is like a marble statue. It is not natural at her years to be so reserved."

"Oh," answered Robert, "let her alone, there are talkers enough in the world. She is a modest girl — the only one in the field, I should say, and that is a great ornament to all women, if they would but see it."

"Well, Robert, at all events, have your eye on them; they are strangers, and the people about here are vulgar behaved to strangers, you know."

"I'll take care; and as for Rachael, she knows how to answer the fools — I noticed that the first day."

Sunday evening came; the villagers formed in groups about the ale-house, the stocks, and the other points of resort, and their occasional laughter fell discordantly upon the ear, so holy and tranquil seemed the air and the sky. Robert Hathorn strolled out at the back of the house to drink the sabbath sunset after a week of toil: at the back of the largest barn was a shed, and from this shed as he drew near to it there issued sounds that seemed to him as sweetly in unison with that holy sunset as the villagers' rude mirth was out of tune. He came to the back of the shed, and it was Rachael reading the Bible aloud to her grandfather. The words were golden, and fell like dew upon all the spirits within their reach — upon Robert, who listened to them unseen; upon Patrick, whose testy nature was calmed and soothed, and upon Rachael herself, who seemed at this moment more hopeful, and less determined to shrink within herself. Her voice, always sweet and winning, became richer and mellower as she read; and when she closed the book, she said with a modest fervor one would hardly have suspected her of, "Blessed be God for this book, grandfather! I do think it is the best thing of all the

good things He has given the world, and it is very encouraging to people of low condition like us."

"Ay," said the old man, "those were bold words you read just now, 'Blessed are the poor.'"

"Let us take them to heart, old man, since, strange as they sound, they must be true."

Corporal Patrick pondered awhile in silence, then said he was weary: "Let us bless the good people, whose bread we have eaten this while, and I will go to sleep. Rachael, my child, if it was not for you, I could wish not to wake again."

Poor old man, he was a-weary; he had seen better days, and fourscore years is a great age, and he had been a soldier, and fought in great battles head erect, and now, in his feeble days, it was hard to have to bow the back and bend over the sickle among boys and girls who jeered him, and whose peaceful grandsires he had defended against England's enemies.

Corporal Patrick and his granddaughter went into the barn to sleep, as heretofore, on the straw. Robert Hathorn paced thoughtfully home, and about half an hour after this a cowboy came into the barn to tell Corporal Patrick there were two truckle-beds at his service in a certain loft, which he undertook to show him. So the old soldier and Rachael bivouacked no longer in the barn.

"Who sent you?" said Rachael to the boy.

"Mistress."

After this Robert Hathorn paid considerable attention both to Patrick and Rachael, and she showed by degrees that she was not quite ice to a man that could respect her; not that her manner was inviting even to him, but at least it was courteous, and once or twice she even smiled on him, and a beautiful smile it was when it did come; and whether from its beauty or its rarity made a great impression on all who saw it.

It was a fine harvest time upon the whole, and with some interruptions the work went merrily on; the two strangers, in spite of hard labor, improved in appearance. Mrs. Hathorn set this down to the plentiful and nourishing meals which issued twice a day from her kitchen, and as they had always been her favorites, she drew Robert's attention to the bloom that began to spread over Rachael's cheek, and the old soldier's brightening eye, as her work in a great measure.

Mrs. Mayfield was away, and during her absence Hickman had not come once to visit his farm or Hathorn's. This looked ugly.

"Wife," said the farmer one day, "what makes our Robert so moody of late?"

"Oh, you have noticed it, have you? Then I am right; the boy has something on his mind."

"That is easy to be seen, and I think I know what it is."

"Do you, John? what?"

"Why, he sees this Hickman is in a fair way to carry off Rose Mayfield."

"It is not that."

"Why, what else can it be?"

"It is a wonder to me," said Mrs. Hathorn, "that a man shouldn't know his own son better than you seem to know Robert. They are very good friends; but what makes you think Robert would marry her? have you forgotten how strict he is about women? Why did he part with Lucy Blackwood, the only sweetheart he ever had?"

"Hanged if I remember!"

"Because she got herself spoken of, flirting at Oxford races once in a way; and Rose does mostly nothing else. And they do say, that once or twice since her husband died, ahem!" —

"She has kicked over the traces altogether? Fiddlestick!"

"Fiddlestick be it! She is a fine, spirity woman, and such are apt to set folks talking more than they can prove. Well, Robert wouldn't marry a woman that made folk talk about her."

"Oh, he is not such a fool as to fling the farm to a stranger. When does Rose come home?"

"Next week, as soon as the assizes are over, and the Drayton cause settled one way or other."

"Well, when she comes back you will see him clear up directly, and then I shall know what to do. They must come together, and they shall come together; and if there is no other way, I know one that will bring them together, and I'll work that way if I'm hanged for it."

"With all my heart!" said Mrs. Hathorn calmly: "you can but try."

"I *will* try all I know."

Will it be believed, that while he was in this state of uneasiness about his favorite project, Mr. Casenower came and invited him to a friendly conference, announced to him that he admired Mrs. Mayfield beyond measure and had some reason to think she was not averse to him, and requested the farmer's co-operation?

"Confound the jade!" thought Hathorn, "she has been spreading the net for this one too then: she will break my heart before I have done with her."

He answered demurely, "that he did not understand women; that his mind was just now in the harvest; and he hoped Mr. C. would excuse him, and try his luck himself — along with the rest," said the old boy rather bitterly.

The harvest drew toward its close; the barns began to burst with the golden crops, and one fair rick after

another rose behind them like a rear-guard, until one fine burning-hot day in September there remained nothing but a small barley-field to carry.

In the house Mrs. Hathorn and the servants were busy preparing the harvest-home dinner; in the farmyard Casenower and old Hathorn were arguing a point of husbandry; the warm haze of a September day was over the fields; the little pigs toddled about contentedly in the straw of the farmyard, rooting here and grunting there; the pigeons sat upon the barn tiles in flocks, and every now and then one would come shooting down, and settle with flapping wings upon a bit of straw six inches higher than the level; and ever and anon was heard the thunder of the horses' feet as they came over the oak floor of a barn, drawing a loaded wagon into it.

Suddenly a halloo was heard down the road; Mr. Casenower and Hathorn looked over the wall, and it was Mrs. Mayfield's boy Tom, riding home full pelt and hurrahing as he came along.

"We have won the day, farmer," shouted he; "you may dine at Drayton if you wool. La bless you! the judge wouldn't hear a word again us. Hurrah! here comes the mistress; hurrah!" And sure enough Mrs. Mayfield was seen in her hat and habit, riding her bay mare up at a hand gallop on the grass by the roadside. Up she came; the two men waved their hats to her, which salute she returned on the spot, in the middle of a great shy which her mare made as a matter of course; but before they could speak she stopped their mouths. "Where is Robert? not a word till he is by. I have not forgot to whom I owe it." She sprang from the saddle, and gave a hand to each of the men; but before they could welcome her, or congratulate her, she had the word again. "Why, of course you are; you are going to tell me you have been as dull as ditch-water since I

went, as if I didn't know that; and as for Drayton, we will all go there together in the afternoon, and I'll kiss your Robert then and there; and then he will faint away, and we'll come home in the cool of the evening. Is barley cart done yet?"

"No, you are just in time; they are in the last field.

"Well, I must run in and cuddle Jane, and help them on with dinner a bit."

"Ay, do, Rose; put a little life into them."

In about ten minutes Mrs. Mayfield joined them again; and old Hathorn, who had spent that period in a brown study, began operations upon her like a cautious general as he was.

His first step might be compared to reconnoitring the ground; and here, if any reader of mine imagines that country people are simple and devoid of art, for Heaven's sake resign that notion, which is entirely founded on pastorals written in metropolitan garrets.

Country people look simple; but that is a part of their profound art. They are the square-nosed sharks of *terra firma*. Their craft is smooth, plausible, and unfathomable. You don't believe me, perhaps. Well, then, my sharp cockney, go live and do business in the country, and tell me at the year's end whether you have not found humble unknown practitioners of Humbug, Flattery, Over-reaching, and Manœuvre, to whom Thieves' Inn London might go to school.

We hear much from such as write with the but-end of their grandfather's flageolet, about simple swains and downy meads: but when you get there the natives are at least as downy as any part of the concern.

"I thought you would be home to-day, Rose."

"Did you? Why?"

"Because Richard Hickman has been here twice this morning."

"Richard Hickman? what was his business here?"

"Well, they do say you and he are to go to church together one of these days — the pair of you."

"Well, if the pair of us go to church there will be a pair of weddings that day."

"How smooth a lie do come off a woman's tongue, to be sure!" thought Mr. Hathorn.

Mr. Casenower put in his word. "I trust I shall not offend you by my zeal, madam, but I hope to see you married to a better man than Hickman."

"With all my heart, Mr. Cas— hem! You find me a better man, and I won't make two bites at him — ha! ha! ha!"

"He bears an indifferent character — ask the farmer here."

"Oh," said the farmer, with an ostentation of candor, "I don't believe all I hear."

"I don't believe half, nor a quarter," said Mrs. M.; "but, for Heaven's sake, don't fancy I am wrapped up in Richard Hickman, or in any other man: but he is as good company as here and there one, and he has a tidy farm nigh hand, and good land of his own out Newbury way, by all accounts."

"Good land!" shouted the farmer: "did you ever see it?"

"Not I."

"Rose," said Hathorn solemnly (he had never seen it either), "it is as poor as death! covered with those long docks, I hear, and that is a sure sign of land with no heart in it, just as a thistle is a good sign. Do your books tell you that?" said he, suddenly turning to Casenower.

"No," said that gentleman with incredulous contempt.

"And it is badly farmed; no wonder, when the farmer never goes nigh it himself, trusts all to a sort of

bailiff. Mind your eye, Rose. Why does he never go there? tell me that."

"Well, you know, of course he tells me he left it out of regard for me."

"Haw, haw, haw! why, he has known you but six months, and he has not lived at home this five years. What do you think of it, Mr. Casenower? Mind your eye, Rose."

"I mean to," said Rose; and if you had seen the world of suppressed fun and peeping observation in the said eye, you would have felt how capable it was of minding itself, and of piercing like a gimlet even through a rustic Machiavel.

Mr. Casenower whispered to Hathorn, "Put in a word for me." He then marched up to Rose, and taking her hand, said with a sepulchral tenderness, at which Rose's eyes literally danced in her head, "Know your own value, dear Mrs. Mayfield, and do not throw yourself away on an unworthy object." He then gave Hathorn a slight wink and disappeared, leaving his cause in that simple rustic's hands.

"It is all very fine, but if I am to wait for a man without a fault, I shall die an old — fool."

"That is not to be thought of," said Hathorn smoothly; "but what you want is a fine steady young man — like my Robert, now."

"So you have told me once or twice of late," said the lady archly. "Robert is a good lad, and pleases my eye well enough for that matter; but he has a fault that wouldn't suit me, nor any woman, I should think, without she was a fool."

"Why, what is wrong about the boy?"

"The boy looks sharper after women than women will bear. He reads everything we do with magnifying-glasses: and I like fun, always did, and always shall;

and then he would be jealous — and then I should leave him the house to himself, that is all."

"No, no! you would break him in to common-sense."

"More likely he would make a slave of me; and, if I am to be one, let me gild the chain a bit, as the saying is."

"Now, Rose," said the tactician, "you know very well a woman can turn a man round her finger if he loves her."

"Of course I know that; but Robert does not happen to love me."

"Doesn't love you! Ay, but he does!"

"What makes you think that?"

"Oh, if you are blind, I am not. He tries to hide it, because you are rich, and he is poor and proud."

"Oh, fie! don't talk nonsense. What signifies who has the money?"

"The way I first found it out, is, when they speak of you marrying that Hickman, he trimbles all over like. Here comes his mother; you ask her," added the audacious schemer.

"No, no!" cried Mrs. Mayfield; "none of your nonsense before her, if you please;" and she ran off with a heightened color.

"I shall win the day," cried Hathorn to his wife. "I have made her believe Robert loves her, and now I'll tell him she dotes on him. Why, what is the matter with you? You seem put out. What ails you?"

"I have just seen Robert, and I don't like his looks. He is like a man in a dream this morning — worse than ever."

"Why, what can be the matter with him?"

"If I was to tell you my thought it wouldn't please you — and, after all, I may be wrong. Hush! here he is. Take no notice, for Heaven's sake."

At this moment the object of his father's schemes and his mother's anxiety sauntered up to them, with his coat tied round his neck by the arms, and a pitchfork over his shoulder. "Father," said he, "you may tap the barrel; the last wagon is coming up the lane."

"Ay," was the answer; "and you go and offer your arm to Rose — she is come home — and ask her to dance with you."

"I am not in the humor to gallivant," was the languid answer. "I leave that to you, father."

"To me — at my time of life! Is that the way to talk at eight-and-twenty? And Rose Mayfield — the rose-tree in full blossom!"

"Yes; but too many have been smelling at the blossom for me ever to plant the tree in my garden."

"What does the boy mean?"

"To save time and words, father; because you have been at me about her once or twice of late."

"What! is it because she likes dancing and diversion at odd times? Is that got to be a crime, Parson Bob?"

"No! but I won't have a wife I couldn't trust at those pastimes," was the resolute answer.

"Oh, if you are one of the jealous-minded ones, don't you marry any one, my poor chap!"

"Father, there are the strange reapers to pay. Shall I settle with them for you?" said Robert, quietly.

"No! Let them come here; I'll pay them," answered Hathorn senior, rather sullenly.

If you want to be crossed and thwarted and vexed, set your heart not on a thing you can do yourself, but on something somebody else is to do: if you want to be tormented to death, let the wish of your heart depend upon *two* people, a man and a woman, neither of them yourself. Now do try this recipe; you will find it an excellent one.

Old Hathorn, seated outside his own door, with a table and money-bags before him, paid the Irishmen and the Hampshire lads, and invited each man to the harvest-home dinner. He was about to rise and put up his money-bags, when Mrs. Hathorn cried to him from the house, "Here are two more that have not been paid;" and the next minute old Patrick and Rachael issued from the house, and came in front of the table. Robert, who was going in to dress, turned round and leaned against the corner of the house, with his eyes upon the ground. "Let me see," said Hathorn, "what are you to have?"

"Count yourself," replied Patrick; "you know what you give the others."

"What I give the others! but you can't have done the work"—

"Not of two; no, we don't ask the wages of two."

"Of course you don't."

A spasm of pain crossed Robert's face at this discussion, but he remained with his eyes upon the ground.

"Where's the dispute?" said the old soldier, angrily; "here are two that ask the wages of one; is that hard upon you?"

"There is no dispute, old man," said Robert steadily. "Father, twenty-five times five shillings is six pound five; that is what you owe them."

"Six pound five, for a man of that age?"

"And my daughter; is she to go for nothing?"

"Your daughter, your daughter; she is not strong enough to do much, I'm sure."

Rachael colored: her clear, convincing voice fell upon the disputants. "We agreed with Master Robert to keep a ridge between us, and we have done it as well as the best reaper. Pay us as one good reaper, then."

"That's fair! that is fair! If you agreed with my

son, a bargain is a bargain; but for all that, one good arm is better than two weak ones, and" —

This tirade received an unexpected interruption. Robert walked up to the table, without lifting his eyes from the ground, and said, "I ask your pardon, father, your bad leg has kept you at home this harvest; but I rip't at the head of the band, and I assure you the young woman did a man's share; and every now and then the old man took her place; and so resting by turns they kept ahead of the best sickle there. And therefore I say," continued Robert, raising his eyes timidly, "on account of their poverty, their weary limbs, and their stout heart for work, you cannot pay them less than one good reaper."

"What is it, Robert?" asked Mrs. Hathorn, who had come out to see the meaning of all this.

"But if he would be juster still, mother, like him that measures his succor to the need, he would pay them as one and a half; I've said it."

Hathorn stared with ludicrous wonder. "And why not as two? Are you mad, Robert? taking their part against me?"

"Enough said," answered Patrick with spirit. "Thank you, Master Robert, but that would be an alms, and we take but our due. Pay our two sickles as one, and let us go."

"You see, father," cried Robert, "these are decent people, and if you had seen how they wrought, your heart would melt as mine does. O mother! it makes me ill to think there are poor Christians in the world so badly off they must bow to work beyond their age and strength to bear. Take a thought, father. A man that might be *your* father — a man of fourscore years — and a delicate woman — to reap, the hardest of all country work, from dawn till sundown, under this

scorching sun and wind that has dried my throat and burned my eyes, — let alone theirs. It is hard, father; and if you have a feeling heart you can't show it better than here."

"There, there!" cried the farmer, "say no more; it is all right (you have made the girl cry, Bob). Robert doesn't often speak, dame, so we are bound to listen when he does. There is the money. I never heard that chap say so many words before."

"We thank you all," said Patrick; "my blessing be on your grain, good folks; and that won't hurt you from a man of fourscore."

"That it will not, Daddy Patrick," said Mrs. Hathorn. "You will stay for harvest-home, both of you? Rachael, if you have a mind to help me, wash some of the dishes."

"Ay!" cried the farmer: "and it is time you were dressed, Bob." And so the party separated.

A few minutes later Rachael came to the well, and began to draw a bucket of water. This well worked in the following manner: a chain and rope were passed over a cylinder, and two buckets were attached to the several ends of the rope, so that the empty bucket descending, helped in some slight degree the full bucket to mount. This cylinder was turned by an iron handle. The well was a hundred feet deep. Rachael drew the bucket up easily enough until the last thirty feet; and then she found it hard work. She had both hands on the iron handle, and was panting a little like a tender fawn, when a deep but gentle voice said in her ear, "Let go, Rachael;" and the handle was taken out of her hand by Robert Hathorn.

"Never mind me, Master Robert," said Rachael, giving way reluctantly.

"Always at some hard work or other," said he; "you will not be easy till you kill yourself." And with this

he whirled the handle round like lightning with one hand, and the bucket came up in a few moments. He then filled a pitcher for her, which she took up, and was about to go into the house with it. "Stay one minute, Rachael."

"Yes, Master Robert."

"How old are you, Rachael?" Robert blushed after he had put this question; but he was obliged to say something, and he did not well know how to begin.

"Twenty-two," was Rachael's answer.

"Don't go just yet. Is this your first year's reaping?"

"No, the third."

"You must be very poor, I am afraid."

"Very poor indeed, Master Robert."

"Do you live far from here?"

"Don't you remember I told you I came twenty miles from here?"

"Why, Newbury is about that distance."

"I think your mother will want me."

"Well, don't let me keep you against your will."

Rachael entered the Hathorns' side.

Robert's heart sank. She was so gentle, yet so cold and sad. There was no winning her confidence, it appeared. Presently she returned with an empty basket to fetch the linen from Mrs. Mayfield's side. As she passed Robert, who, in despair, had determined not to try any more, but who looked up sorrowfully in her face, she gave him a smile, a very faint one, but still it did express some slight recognition and thanks. His resolve melted at this one little ray of kindly feeling.

"Rachael," said he, "have you any relations your way?"

"Not now;" and Rachael was a beautiful statue again.

"But you have neighbors who are good to you?"

"We ask nothing of them."

"Would it not be better if you could both live near us?"

"I think not."

"Why? my mother has a good heart."

"Indeed she has."

"And Mrs. Mayfield is not a bad one, either."

"I hear her well spoken of."

"And yet you mean to live on, so far away from all of us?"

"Yes! I must go for the linen." She waited a moment as it were for permission to leave him, and nothing more being said, she entered Mrs. Mayfield's side.

Robert leaned his head sorrowfully on the rails and fell into a reverie.

"I am nothing to her," thought he; "her heart is far away. How good, and patient, and modest she is, but oh, how cold! She turns my heart to stone. I am a fool; she has some one in her own country to whom she is as warm, perhaps, as she is cold to us strangers — is that a fault? She is too beautiful, and too good, not to be esteemed by others beside me. Ah! her path is one way, mine another — worse luck — would to God she had never come here! Well, may she be happy! She can't hinder me from praying she may be happy, happier than she is now. Poor Rachael!"

A merry but somewhat vulgar voice broke incredibly harsh and loud, as it seemed, upon young Hathorn's reverie.

"Good-day, Master Robert."

Robert looked up, and there stood a young farmer in shooting-jacket and gaiters, with a riding-whip in his hand.

"Good-morning, Mr. Hickman."

"The mistress is come home, I hear, and it is your harvest-home to-day, so I'll stop here, for I am tired, and so is my horse for that matter." Mr. Hickman wasted the latter part of this discourse on vacancy, for young Hathorn went coolly away without taking any further notice of him.

"I call that the cold shoulder," thought Hickman; "but it is no wonder; that chap wants to marry her himself, of course he does — not if I know it, Bob Hathorn."

It was natural that Hickman, whose great object just now was Rose Mayfield, should put this reading on Robert's coldness: but in point of fact, it was not so; the young man had no feeling towards Hickman but the quiet repugnance of a deep to a shallow soul, of a quiet and thoughtful to a rattling fellow. Only just now gayety was not in his heart, and as Hickman was generally gay, and always sonorous, he escaped to his own thoughts. Hickman watched his retreat with an eye that said, "You are my rival, but not one I fear: I can outwit you." And it was with a smile of triumphant conscious superiority that Richard Hickman turned round to go into Mrs. Mayfield's house, and found himself face to face with Rachael, who was just coming out of it with the basket full of linen in her hand.

Words cannot paint the faces of this woman and this man, when they saw one another. They both started, and were red and white by turns, and their eyes glared upon one another; yet, though the surprise was equal, the emotion was not quite the same. The woman stood, her bosom heaving slowly and high, her eye dilating, her lips apart, her elastic figure rising higher and higher. She stood there wild as a startled panther, uncertain whether to fight or to fly. The man, after the first

start, seemed to cower under her eye, and half a dozen expressions that chased one another across his face left one fixed there — Fear! abject fear!

CHAPTER II.

They eyed one another in silence: at last Hickman looked down upon the ground and said, in faltering, ill-assured tones, "H-how d'ye do, Rachael? I — I didn't expect to see you here."

"Nor I you."

"If you are busy, don't let me stop you, you know," said Hickman, awkwardly and confused, and like one with no great resources compelled to utter something.

Then Rachael, white as a sheet, took up her basket again, and moved away in silence; the young farmer eyed her apprehensively, and, being clearly under the influence of some misgivings as to her intentions, said, "If you blow me, it will do me harm and you no good, you know, Rachael. Can't we be friends?"

"Friends! — you and I?"

"Don't be in such a hurry — let us talk it over. I am a little better off than I used to be in those days."

"What is that to me?"

"Plenty; if you won't be spiteful, and set others against me in this part;" by "others," doubtless Hickman intended Mrs. Mayfield.

"I shall neither speak nor think of you," was the cold answer.

Had Richard Hickman been capable of fathoming Rachael Wright, or even of reading her present marble look and tone aright, he would have seen that he had little to apprehend from her beyond contempt, a thing

he would not in the least have minded; but he was cunning, and, like the cunning, shallowish, so he pursued his purpose feeling his way with her to the best of his ability.

"I have had a smart bit of money left me lately, Rachael."

"What is that to me?"

"What is it? why, a good deal, because I could assist you *now*, maybe."

"And what right have you to assist me *now?*"

"Confound it, Rachael, how proud you are! — why, you are not the same girl. Oh! I see, as for assisting you, I know you would rather work than be in debt to any one; but then there is another besides you, you know."

"What other?" said Rachael, losing her impassibility, and trembling all over at this simple word.

"What other? why, confound it, who ever saw a girl fence like this? I suppose you think I am not man enough to do what's right; I am though, now I have got the means."

"To do what?"

"Why, to do my duty by him — to provide for him."

"FOR WHOM?" cried Rachael wildly, "WHEN HE IS DEAD?"

"Dead?"

"Dead!"

"Don't say so, Rachael; don't say so."

"He is dead!"

"Dead! I never thought I should have cared much; but that word do seem to knock against my heart. I'd give a hundred pounds to any one would tell me it is not true — poor thing; I've been to blame; I've been to blame."

"You were not near us when he came into the world;

you were not near us when he went out of it. He lived in poverty with me; he died in poverty for all I could do, and it is against my will if I did not die with him. Our life or our death gave you no care. Whiles he lived, you received a letter every six months from me, claiming my rights as your wife."

Hickman nodded assent.

"Last year you had no letter."

"No more there was."

"And did not that tell you? Poor Rachael had lost her consolation and her hope, and had no more need of anything!"

"Poor Rachael!" cried the man, stung with sudden remorse. "Curse it all! Curse you, Dick Hickman!" Then, suddenly recovering his true nature, and, like us men, never at a loss for an excuse against a woman, he said angrily, "What is the use of letters — why didn't you come and tell me you were so badly off?"

"Me come after you the wrong-doer?"

"Oh! confound your pride! should have sent the old man to me, then."

"My grandfather, an old soldier as proud as fire! Send him to the man who robbed me of my good name by cheating the law. You are a fool! Three times he left our house with his musket loaded to kill you — three times I got him home again; but how? — by prayers, and tears, and force — all three, or you would not be here in life."

"The devil! what an old Tartar! I say, is he here along with you?"

"Oh, you need not fear," said Rachael, with a faint expression of scorn, "he is going directly, and I am going too; and when I do go from here I shall have lost all the little pleasure and hope I have in the world," said Rachael, sorrowfully, and as she said this, she became

unconscious of Hickman's presence, and moved away without looking at him; but that prudent person dared not part with her so. He was one of those men who say, "I know the women," and, in his sagacity, he dreaded this woman's tongue. He determined, therefore, to stop her tongue, and not to risk Rose Mayfield and thousands for a few pounds.

"Now, Rachael, listen to me. Since the poor child is dead, there is only you to think of. We can do one another good or harm, you and I; better good than harm, I say. Suppose I offered you twenty pounds, now, to keep dark?"

"You poor creature!"

"Well, thirty, then?"

"Oh, hold your tongue! — you make me ashamed of myself as well as you."

"I see what it is, you want too much: you want me to be your husband."

"No; while my child lived, I claimed my right for his sake; but not now, not now," and the poor girl suddenly turned her eyes on Hickman with an indescribable shudder, that a woman would have interpreted to the letter; but no man could be expected to read it quite aright, so many things it said.

Hickman, the sagacious, chose to understand by it pique and personal hostility to him, and desire of vengeance; and, having failed to bribe her, he now resolved to try and outface her.

It so happened that at this very moment merry voices began to sound on every side. The clatter was heard of tables being brought out of the kitchen, and the harvest-home people were seen coming towards the place where Rachael and Hickman were; so Hickman said, hastily, "Any way, don't think to blow me — for if you do, I'll swear ye out, my lass, I'll swear ye out."

"No doubt you know how to lie," was the cold reply.

"There, Rachael," cried Hickman piteously, lowering his tone of defiance in a moment, "don't expose me before the folk, whatever you do. Here they all come, confound them!"

Rachael made no answer. She retired into the Hathorns' house, and in a few minutes the tables were set just outside the house, and loaded with good cheer, and the rustics began to ply knife and fork as zealously as they had sickle, and rake, and pitchfork. And so, on the very spot of earth where Rachael had told Hickman her child was dead, and with him her heart, scarce five minutes afterwards came the rattle of knives and forks, and peals of boisterous laughter, and huge feeding. And thus it happens to many a small locality in this world, — tragedy, comedy, and farce are acted on it by turns, and all of them in earnest. So harvest-home dinner proceeded with great zeal, and after the solids the best ale was served round *ad libitum*, and intoxication, sanctified by immemorial usage, followed in due course. However, as this symptom of harvest was a long time coming on upon the present occasion, owing to peculiar interruptions, the reader will not have to follow us so far, which, let us hope, he will not regret.

Few words worthy of being embalmed in an immortal story, warranted to live a month, were uttered during the discussion of the meats, for when the *fruges consumere nati* are let loose upon beef, bacon, and pudding, among the results dialogue on a large scale is not.

"Yet shall the Muse" embalm a conversation that passed on this occasion between the brothers Messenger, laborers, aged about fifty, who had been on this farm nearly all their lives.

Bob Messenger was carving a loin of veal. Jem Messenger sat opposite him, eating bacon and beans on a very large scale.

Bob (aiming at extraordinary politeness). Wool you have some veal along with your bacon, Jem?

Jem. That I wool not, Bob (with a reproachful air, as one whom a brother had sought to entrap).

When the table was cleared of the viands, the ale-mugs and horns were filled, and Mrs. Mayfield and the Hathorns took part in the festive ceremony — that is, they did not sit at the table, but they showed themselves from time to time, and made their humble guests heartily welcome by word and look and smile, as their forefathers had done at harvest time each in their century and generation.

Presently Bob Messenger arose solemnly, with his horn of ale in his hand. The others rose after him, knowing well what he was going to do, and chanted with him the ancient harvest-home stave, —

Here's a health unto our master,
The founder of the feast,
Not only to our master,
But to our mistress.
Two voices. Then drink, boys, drink,
And see as you do not spill,
For if you do you shall drink to
Our health with a free good-will.
Chorus. Then drink, boys, drink, etc.

Corporal Patrick and Rachael left the table. They had waited only to take part in this compliment to their entertainers, and now they left. The reason was, one or two had jeered them before grace.

The corporal had shaved and made himself very clean, and he had put on his faded red jacket, which he always carried about, and Rachael had washed his neck-handkerchief, and tied it neatly about his neck, and had put on herself a linen collar and linen wristband, very small

and plain, but white and starched; and at this their humble attempt to be decent and nice, one or two (who happened to be dirty at the time) could not help sneering. Another thing, Rachael and Patrick were strangers. Some natives cut a jest or two at their expense, and Patrick was about to answer by flinging his mug at one man's head, but Rachael restrained him, and said, "Be patient, grandfather. They were never taught any better. When the farmer's health has been drunk we can leave them."

People should be able to take jests, or to answer them in kind, not to take them to heart; but Rachael and Patrick had seen better days (they were not so very proud and irritable then), and now Patrick, naturally high-spirited, was sore, and could not bear to be filliped, and Rachael was become too cold and bitter towards all the vulgar natures that blundered up against her, not meaning her any good, nor much harm either, poor devils!

A giggle greeted their departure, but it must be owned it was a somewhat uneasy giggle.

There was in the company a certain Timothy Brown John, who was naturally a shoemaker, but was turned out into the stubble annually at harvest time. The lad had a small rustic genius for music, which he illustrated by playing the clarionet in church, to the great regret of the clergyman. Now, after the chorus, one or two were observed to be nudging this young man, and he to be making those mock-modest difficulties which are part of a singer in town or country.

"Ay, Tim," cried Mrs. Mayfield, "you sing us a song."

"He have got a new one, mistress," put in a carter's lad, with saucer eyes.

"What is it about, boy?"

"Well," replied the youngster, "it is about love (at

which the girls giggled), and I think it is about you, Dame Mayfield."

"About me! then it must be nice."

Chorus of Rustics. Haw! haw! haw!

"Come, Mr. Brown John, I will trouble you for it directly. I can see the bottom of some of their mugs, Jane."

"Well," said Mr. Brown John, looking down, "I don't know what to say about it. Mayhap you mightn't like it quite so well before so much company."

"Why not, pray?"

"Well, you see, dame, I am afeard I shall give you a red face, like, with this here song."

"If you do, I'll give you one with this here hand."

Chorus. Haw, haw! ho!

"Drat the boy! sing, and have done with it."

"I'll do my best, ma'am," replied Tim gravely.

On this, Mr. Brown John drew from his pocket a diminutive flute, with one key, and sounded his G at great length. He then paused, to let his G enter his own mind and those around; he then composed his features like a preacher, and was about to enter on his undertaking, when the whole operation was suddenly and remorselessly and provokingly interrupted by Mr. Casenower, who, struck, as it appeared, with a sudden, irresistible idea, burst upon them all with this question: —

"Do any of you know one Rebecca Reid, in this part of the world?"

The company stared.

Some, to whom this question had been put by him before, giggled, others scratched their heads, others got no farther than a stricken look. A few mustered together their wits, and assured Mr. Casenower they had never heard tell of the "wench."

"How odd!" cried Casenower. "It is not such a common combination of sounds, one would think."

"I know Hannah Reid," squeaked a small cow-boy; he added, with enthusiasm, "She is a capital slider, she is!" and he smiled at some reminiscence, perchance of a joint somersault upon the ice last winter.

"Hannah does not happen to be Rebecca, young gentleman," objected Casenower: "sing away, John Brown."

"I'm a-going, sir. G—g—g—g—" and he impressed the key-note once more upon their souls. Then sang Brown John the following song, and the rest made the laughing chorus, and, as they all laughed in different ways, though they began laughing from their heads, ended in laughing from their hearts. It was pleasant, and rather funny, and proved so successful that after this *Il Maestro* Brown John and his song were asked to all the feasts in a circle of seven miles.

There were eight verses: we will confine ourselves to two, because paper is not absolutely valueless, whatever the trivoluminous may think.

When Richard appeared, how my heart pit-a-pat,
With a tenderly motion, with which it was seized!
To hear the young fellow's gay, innocent chat,
I could listen forever — oh dear! I'm so pleased!
I'm so pleased! ha! ha! ha! ha!
I'm so pleased! ha! ha! ha! ha!
I'm going to be married — oh dear! I'm so pleased!
I'm going to be married — oh dear! I'm so pleased!

Chorus. I'm so pleased, etc.

Oh, sweet is the smell of the new-mown hay,
And sweet are the cowslips that spring in May;
But sweeter's my lad than the daisied lawn,
Or the hay, or the flower, or the cows at the dawn.

Chorus. I'm so pleased, etc.

We writers can tell "the what," but not so very often "the how," of anything. I can give Tim's bare words, but it is not in my power, nor any man's, to write down the manner of *Il Maestro* in singing. How he dwelt on the short syllables, and abridged the long, his grave face till he came to his laugh, and then the enormous mouth that flew suddenly open, and the jovial peal that came ringing through two rows of teeth like white chess-pawns, and, with all this, his quaint, indescribable, dulcet, rustic twang, that made his insignificant melody ring like church-bells heard from the middle of a wood, and taste like metheglin come down to us in a yew-tree cask from the Druids!

During the song one Robert Munday and his son, rural fiddlers, who by instinct nosed festivities, appeared at the gate, each with a green bag. A shriek of welcome greeted them. They were set in a corner, with beef and ale galore, and soon the great table was carried in, the ground cleared, the couples made, and the fiddles tuning.

The Messrs. Munday made some preliminary flourishes, like hawks hovering uncertain where to pounce, and then, like the same bird, they suddenly dashed into "The Day in June."

Their style was rough, and bore a family likeness to ploughing, but it was true, clean, and spirited; the notes of the *arpeggio* danced out like starry sparks in fireworks.

Moreover, the Messrs. Munday played to the foot, which is precisely what your melted-butter violinist always fails to do, whether he happens to be washing out the soul of a waltz, or of a polka, or of a reel.

They also played so as to raise the spirits of all who heard them, young or old, which is an artistic effect of the very highest order, however attained, and never is and never will be attained by the melted-butter violinist.

The fiddlers being merry, the dancers were merry;

the dancers being merry, the fiddlers said to themselves, "Aha! we have not missed fire," and so grew merrier still; and thus the electric fire of laughter and music darted to and fro. Dance, sons and daughters of toil! None had ever a better right to dance than you have this sunny afternoon in clear September. It was you who painfully ploughed the stiff soil, it was you who trudged up the high, incommoding furrow, and cast abroad the equal seed. You that are women bowed the back and painfully drilled holes in the soil, and poured in the seed; and this month past you have all bent, and with sweating brows cut down and housed the crops that came from the seed you planted. Dance, for those yellow ricks, trophies of your labor, say you have a right to; those barns, bursting with golden fruit, swear you have a right to. Harvest-tide comes but once a year. Dance, sons and daughters of toil! Exult over your work, smile with the smiling year, and in this bright hour, oh cease, my poor souls, to envy the rich and great. Believe me, they are never, at any hour of their lives, so cheery as you are now. How can they be? With them dancing is tame work, an every-day business, no rarity, no treat; don't envy them; God is just, and deals the sources of content with a more equal hand than appears on the surface of things. Dance, too, without fear; let no Puritan make you believe it is wrong. Things are wrong out of season, and right in season: to dance in harvest is as becoming as to be grave in church. The Almighty has put it into the hearts of insects to dance in the afternoon sun, and of men and women in every age and every land to dance round the gathered crop, whether it be corn, or oil, or wine, or any other familiar miracle that springs up sixty-fold, and nurtures and multiplies the life of man. More fire, fiddlers! play to the foot, play to the heart, the sprightly "Day in June." Ay! foot it freely, lads and

lasses; my own heart is warmer to think you are merry once or twice in your year of labor; dance, my poor brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of toil!

After several dances, Mrs. Mayfield, who had been uneasy in her mind at remaining out of the fun, could bear inaction no longer, so she pounced on Robert Hathorn, and drew him into the magic square. Robert danced, but in a very listless way: so much so, that his mother, who stood by, took occasion to give him a push and say, "Is that the way to dance?" at which poor Robert tried to do better, but his limbs, as well as his face, showed how far his heart was from his heels.

Now, in the middle of this dance, suddenly loud and angry sounds were heard approaching, and the voice of old Patrick was soon distinguished, and the next moment he was seen following Mr. Hickman, and hanging on his rear, loading him with invective. Rachael was by his side, endeavoring, in vain, to soothe him, and to end what to her was a most terrible scene. At a gesture from Mrs. Mayfield, the fiddlers left off and the rustics turned, all curiosity, towards the interruption. "There are bad hearts in the world," shouted Patrick to all present, "vermin that steal into honest houses and file[1] them — bad hearts, that rob the poor of that which is before life; oh, yes, far before life!" and as he uttered the words, Patrick was observed to stagger.

"The old man is drunk," said Hickman. "I don't know what he means."

Rachael colored high and cried, "No! Master Robert, I assure you he is not drunk, but he is not himself: he has been complaining this hour past; see! look at his eye. Good people, my grandfather is ill;" and indeed, as she said these words, Patrick, who from the moment he had staggered, had stared wildly and confusedly

[1] For defile.

around him, suddenly bowed his head and dropped upon his knees; he would have fallen on his face, but Rachael's arm now held him up.

In a moment several persons came round them, amongst the rest, Robert and Mrs. Mayfield. Robert loosened his neckcloth, and, looking at the old man's face and eye, he said, gravely and tenderly, "Rachael, I have seen the like of this before — in harvest."

"O Master Robert! what is it?"

"Rachael, it is a stroke of the sun!" He turned to his mother. "God forgive us all, the old man was never fit for the work we have put him to."

"Come, don't stand gaping there," cried Mrs. Mayfield; "mount my mare and gallop for the doctor — don't spare her — off with you! Betsy, get a bed ready in my garret."

"Eh, dear!" said Mrs. Hathorn, "I doubt the poor thing's troubles are over," and she put up her apron and began to cry.

"Oh, no!" cried Rachael. "Grandfather — don't leave me! — don't leave me!"

Corporal Patrick's lips moved.

"I can't see ye! I can't see any of ye!" he said, half fretfully. "Ah!" he resumed, as if a light had broken in on him. "Yes!" said he very calmly, "I think I am going;" but the next moment he cried in tones that made the bystanders thrill, so wild and piteous they were — "My daughter! my daughter! — she will miss me!"

Robert Hathorn fell on his knees, and took the old hand with one of those grasps that bring soul into contact with soul; the old soldier, who was at this moment past seeing or hearing, felt this grasp, and turned to it as an unconscious plant turns to the light. "I can't see you," said he faintly; "but, whoever you are, take care of my child! — she is such a good child!" The hands

spoke to one another still; then the old soldier almost smiled, and the anxious, frightened look of his face began to calm. "Thank God," he faltered, "they are going to take care of my child!" And, almost with these words, he lost all sense, and lay pale and calm and motionless at their feet, and his hand could grasp Robert's no more. There was a moment of dead silence and inquiring looks. Robert looked into his face gravely and attentively.

When he had so inspected him a little while, he turned to them all, and he said in a deep and almost a stern voice, —

"Hats off!"

They all uncovered, and stood looking like stricken deer at the old soldier as he lay. The red jacket had nothing ridiculous now. When it was new and bright, it had been in great battles. They asked themselves now, had they really sneered at this faded rag of England's glory, and at that withered hero?"

"Didn't think the old man was a-going to leave us like that," said one of these rough penitents, "or I'd never ha' wagged my tongue again un."

Mrs. Mayfield gave orders to have him carried up to her garret: and four stout rustics, two at his head and two at his feet, took him up the stairs, and laid him there on a decent bed. When Rachael saw the clean floor, the little carpet round the foot of the bed, the bright walls and windows, and the snowy sheets made ready for her grandfather, she hid her face and wept, and said but two words — "Too late! too late!"

As Rachael was following her grandfather up the stairs, she met Hickman: that worthy had watched this sorrowful business in silence; he had tears in his eyes, and coming to her, he whispered in her ear, "Rachael, don't fret — I will not desert you now." On the landing, a moment after, Rachael met Robert Hathorn: he

said to her, "Rachael, your grandfather trusted you to me."

When Hickman said that to her, Rachael turned and looked at him.

When Robert said that to her, she lowered her eyes away from him.

CHAPTER III.

The poor battered soldier lay some hours between life and death. Just before sunrise, Rachael, who had watched him all night, and often moistened his temples with vinegar, opened the window: and as the morning air came into the room, a change for the better was observed in the patient — a slight color stole into his pale cheeks, and he seemed to draw a fuller breath, and his heart beat more perceptibly. Rachael kneeled and prayed for him, and then she prayed to him not to leave her alone: the sun had been up about an hour, and came fiery bright into the whitewashed room; for it looked towards the east; and Corporal Patrick's lips moved, but without uttering a sound. Rachael prayed for him again and most fervently. About nine o'clock his lips moved, and this time he spoke, —

"Rear rank, right wheel!"

The next moment, a light shot into his eye. His looks rested upon Rachael: he smiled feebly, but contentedly, then closed his eyes, and slumbered again.

Corporal Patrick lived. But it was a near thing, a very near thing — he was saved by one of those accidents we call luck. When Mrs. Mayfield's Tom rode for the doctor, the doctor was providentially out. Had he been in, our tale would be now bidding farewell to Corporal

Patrick — for this doctor was one of the pig-sticking ones. He loved to stab men and women with a tool that has slain far more than the sword in modern days; it is called "the lancet." Had he found a man insensible, he would have stabbed him; he always stabbed a fellow-creature when he caught it insensible: not very generous, was it? — now, had he drawn from those old veins one table-spoonful of that red fluid which is the life of a man, the aged man would have come to his senses only to sink the next hour, and die for want of that vital stream stolen from him by rule.

As it was, he breathed; and came back to life by slow degrees. At first his right arm was powerless; then he could not move the right leg, but at last he recovered the use of his limbs, but remained feeble, and his poor head was sore confused: one moment he would be quite himself; another, his memory of recent events would be obscured — and then he would shake his head and sigh — but nature was strong in him; and he got better — but slowly.

As soon as he was able to walk, Rachael proposed to Mrs. Mayfield to return home, but Mrs. Hathorn interposed, and requested Rachael to take her own servant's place for another week, in order to let the servant visit her friends. On these terms Rachael remained, and did the work of the Hathorns' house, and it was observed that during this period more color came to her cheek, and her listlessness and languor sensibly diminished.

She was very active and zealous in her work, and old Hathorn was so pleased with her, that he said one day to Mrs. Hathorn, "I don't care if Betsy never comes back at all; this one is worth a baker's dozen of her, this Rachael."

"Betsy will serve our turn as well in the long run," said Mrs. Hathorn, somewhat dryly and thoughtfully.

"Betsy!" replied the farmer, contemptuously; "there is more sense in this Rachael's forefinger than in that wench's whole carcass."

It was about two days after this, that the following conversation took place between Robert Hathorn and his mother: —

"Is it true, what I hear, that Mr. Patrick talks about going next week?"

"Have not they been here long enough, Robert? I wish they may not have been here too long."

"Why too long, when you asked them to stay yourself, mother?"

"Yes, I did; and I doubt I did very wrong. But it is hard for a mother to deny her son."

"I am much obliged to you, mother; but I don't remember that ever I asked you."

"No, no! I don't say that you ever spoke your mind, Robert; but you looked up in my face, and showed your wish plain enough to *my* eye; and you see a poor foolish body like me doesn't know how to say No to her boy that never vexed her. I should have been a better friend to you if I had turned my head away, and made-believe not to see what is in your heart."

Robert paused awhile, then in a low anxious voice, he whispered, —

"Don't you like her, mother?"

"Yes! I like her, my poor soul. What is there to dislike in her? But I don't know her."

"But I know her as well as if we had been seven years acquainted."

"You talk like a child! How can you know a girl that comes from a strange part?"

"I'd answer for her, mother."

"I wouldn't answer for any young wench of them all. I do notice she is very close: ten to one if she has not an acquaintance of some sort, good or bad."

"A bad acquaintance, mother! Never! If you had seen her through all the harvest-month, as I did, respect herself and make others respect her, you would see that girl never could have made a trip in her life."

"Now, Robert, what makes you so sad-like, if you have no misgivings about her?"

"Because, mother, I don't think she likes me so well as I do her."

"All the better," said Mrs. Hathorn, dryly, "make up your mind to that."

"Do not say so! do not say so!" said Robert, piteously.

"Well, Robert, she does not hate you, you may be sure of that. Why is she in such a hurry to go away?"

"Because she has some one in her own country she likes better than me."

"Ay! that is the way you boys read women. More likely she is afraid of liking you too well, and making mischief in a family."

"O mother! do you think it is that?"

"There, I am a fool to tell you such things."

"Oh, no, no, no! There is no friend like a mother."

"There is no fool like a mother, that is my belief."

"No, no! Give me some comfort, mother; tell me you see some signs of liking in her."

"Well, then, when she is quite sure you are not looking her way, I can see her eye dwell upon you as if it was at home."

"Oh, how happy you make me! but, mother, how you must have watched her!"

"Of course I watched her, and you too. I've seen a long while how matters were going."

"But you never spoke to Rose, or my father?"

"If I had, she would have been turned out of the house, and a good job, too; but you would have fretted, you know," and Mrs. Hathorn sighed.

"Mother, I must kiss you. I shall have courage to speak to father about it now."

"Take a thought, Robert. His heart is set upon your marrying your cousin. It would be a bitter pill to the poor old man, and his temper is very hasty. For heaven's sake, take a thought. I don't know what to do, I am sure."

"I must do it soon or late," said Robert resolutely. "No time so good as now. Father is hasty, and he will be angry no doubt; but after awhile he will give in; I don't ask favors every day. Do you consent, mother?"

"O Robert, what is the use asking me whether I consent? I have only one son, and he is a good one. I am afraid I could not say No to your happiness, suppose it was my duty to say No; but your father is not such a fool as I am, and I am main doubtful whether he will ever consent. I wish you could think better of it."

"I will try him, mother, no later than to-day. Why, here he comes. Oh, there is Mr. Casenower with him; that is unlucky. You get him away, mother, and I'll open my mind to father."

Old Hathorn came past the window, and entered the room where Robert and Mrs. Hathorn were. The farmer stumped in, and sat down with some appearance of fatigue. Mr. Casenower sat down opposite him.

That gentleman had in his hand a cabbage. He was proving to the farmer that this plant is more nutritious than the potato. The theory was German in the first instance. "There are but three nourishing principles in all food," argued Mr. Casenower, "and of those, what we call 'fibrine' is the most effective. Now, see, I put my nail to this stalk, and it readily reduces itself to a bundle of little fibres; see, those are pure fibrine, and, taken into the stomach, make the man muscular. Can anything be clearer?"

Mr. Hathorn, who had shown symptoms of impatience, replied to this effect, "That he knew by personal experience that cabbage turns to nothing but hot water in a man's belly."

"There are words to come out of a man's mouth!" objected Mrs. Hathorn.

"Better than cabbage going into it," grunted the farmer.

"Ah, you know nothing of chemistry, my good friend."

"Well, sir, you say there is a deal of heart in a cabbage?"

"I do."

"Then I tell you what I'll do with you, sir. There is some fool has been and planted half an acre of cabbages in my barley-field" —

"It was not a fool," put in Mrs. Hathorn, sharply, "it was me."

"It was not a fool, you see, sir: it was a woman," responded Hathorn, mighty dryly. "Well, sir, you train on the dame's cabbages for a month, and all that time I'll eat nothing stronger than beef and bacon, and at the end of the month I'll fight you for a pot of beer, if you are so minded."

"This is the way we reason in the country, eh, Mr. Robert?"

"Yes, sir: it would serve father right if you took him up, sir, with his game leg; but I don't hold with cabbages, for all that; a turnip is watery enough, but a cabbage and a sponge are pretty much one, it seems to me."

"Mr. Casenower," put in Mrs. Hathorn, "didn't you promise to show me a pansy in your garden, that is to win the next prize at Wallingford?"

"I did, ma'am, but you should not call it 'pansy;'

'heart's-ease' is bad enough, without going back to 'pansy.' *Viola tricolor* is the name of the flower—the scientific name."

"No," said old Hathorn stoutly.

"No! What do you mean by No?"

"What are names for? To remember things by; then the scientifickest name must be one that it is easiest to remember. Now, pansy is a deal easier to remember than 'vile tricolor.'"

"I am at your service, Mrs. Hathorn; come along, for heaven's sake;" and off bustled Mr. Casenower towards the garden with Mrs. Hathorn.

"Father," said Robert, after an uneasy pause, "I have something to say to you, very particular."

"Have you though? well, out with it, my lad!"

"Father"—

At this moment, in bustled Mr. Casenower again. "O Mr. Robert, I forgot something. Let me tell you, now I think of it. I want you to find out this Rebecca Reid for me. She lives somewhere near, within a few miles. I don't exactly know how many. Can't you find her out?"

"Why, sir," said Robert, "it is like looking for one poppy in a field of standing wheat."

"No, no! When you go to market, ask all the farmers from different parishes whether they know her."

"Haw, haw, haw!" went Hathorn senior. "Yes, do, Robert. Ho, ho!"

"Have you any idea what he is laughing at?" said Mr. Casenower, dryly.

"Father thinks you will make me the laughing-stock of the market, sir," said Robert, with a faint smile; "but never mind him, sir, I shall try and oblige you."

"You are a good fellow, Robert. I must go to Mrs. Hathorn," and off he bustled again.

"Father," began Robert; but before he could open his subject, voices were heard outside, and Mrs. Mayfield came in, followed by Richard Hickman.

"Tic, tic, tic!" said poor Robert, peevishly, for he foresaw endless interruptions.

Mr. Hickman had been for some minutes past employed in the agreeable occupation of bringing Mrs. Mayfield to the point; but for various reasons Mrs. Mayfield did not want to be brought to the point that forenoon. One of those reasons was, that although she liked Hickman well enough to marry him, she liked somebody else better, and she was not yet sure as to this person's intentions. She wanted, therefore, to be certain she could not have Paul, before she committed herself to Peter. Now, certain ladies, when they do not want to be brought to the point, have ways of avoiding it that a man would hardly hit upon. One of them is, to be constantly moving about; for, they argue, "If he can't pin my body to any spot, he can't pin my soul, for my soul is contained in my body," and there is a certain vulgar philosophy in this. Another is, to be so absorbed in some small matter, that just then they cannot do justice to the larger question, and so modestly postpone it.

"Will I be yours till death us do part? now, how can I tell you just now? such a question demands at least some attention; and look at this hole in my lace collar, which I am mending; if I don't give my whole soul to it, how can I mend it properly?"

Mr. Hickman had no sooner shown Mrs. Mayfield that he wanted to bring her to the point, than he found himself in for some hard work; twice he had to cross the farmyard with her: he had to take up a sickly chicken and pronounce upon its ailment. He had to get some milk in a pail and give one of her calves a drink. He had to bring one cow from paddock to stall, and another

from stall to paddock; and when all this and much more was done, the lady caught sight of our friends in the Hathorns' kitchen, and crying briskly, "Come this way," led Mr. Hickman into company where she knew he could not press the inopportune topic.

"Curse her!" muttered the enamoured one, as he followed her into the Hathorns' kitchen.

After the usual greetings, the farmer observing Robert's impatience, said to Hickman, "If you will excuse me for a minute, farmer, Robert wants to speak to me; we are going towards the barn." He then beckoned Mrs. Mayfield, and whispered in her ear, "Don't let this one set you against my Robert that is worth a hundred of him."

Mrs. Mayfield whispered in return, "And don't let your Robert shillyshally so, because this one does not — You understand."

"All right," replied Hathorn, "ten to one if it is not you he wants to speak to me about."

Hathorn and his son then sauntered into the farmyard, and Hickman gained what he had been trying for so long, a quiet *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Mayfield — for all that, if a woman is one of those that have a wish, it is dangerous to *drive* her to the point.

"Well, Mrs. Mayfield," said he quietly but firmly, "I am courting you this six months, and now I should be glad to have my answer. 'Yes,' or 'No,' if you please."

Mrs. Mayfield sidled towards the window; it commanded the farmyard: Robert and his father were walking slowly up and down by the side of the farmyard pond. Mrs. Mayfield watched them intently, then half turning towards Hickman, she said slowly, "Why, as to that, Mr. Hickman, you have certainly come after me awhile, and I'll not deny I find you very good company; but I have been married once and made a great mistake,

as you have heard, I dare say; so now I am obliged to be cautious."

"What, are you afraid of my temper, Rose? I am not reckoned a bad-tempered one, any more than yourself."

"Oh, no! I have no fault to find with you — only we have not been acquainted so very long."

"That is a fault will mend every day."

"Of course it will; well, when you are settled on Bix, we shall see you mostly every day, and then we shall know one another better; for if you have no faults, I have; and then you will know better what sort of a bargain you are making; and then — we will see about it."

"Better tell the truth," said the all-observant Hickman.

"The truth!"

"Ay! that the old man wants you to marry Bob Hathorn. Oh! I am down upon him this many a day."

"Robert Hathorn is nothing to me," replied the Mayfield, "but since you put him in my head, I confess I might do worse."

"How could you do worse than marry a lad who has nothing but his two arms?"

Mrs. Mayfield, looking slyly through the window, observed Robert and his father to be in earnest conversation; this somewhat colored her answer. She replied quickly, "Better poor and honest, than half rich and three parts of a rogue!"

"Is that for me, if you please?" said Hickman, calmly but firmly.

"No! I don't say it is," replied the lady, fearful she had gone too far; "but still I wonder at your choosing this time for pressing me."

"Why not this time, as well as another, pray?" and Hickman eyed her intently, though secretly.

"Why not!" said she, and she paused; for the dialogue between Hathorn and his son was now so animated, that the father's tones reached even to her ear.

"Ay! why not?" repeated Hickman.

The lady turned on him, and with a sudden change of manner, said very sharply, "Ask your own conscience."

"I don't know what you mean."

"I'll tell you. This old Patrick was miscalling you, when he fell ill. They say it was a stroke of the sun — maybe it was; but I should say passion had something to do with it too: the old man said words to you that none of the others noticed, but I did. He said as much as that you had robbed some one of what is before life in this world."

"Ay, and what is before life, I wonder?" asked the satirical Hickman.

"Why, nothing," replied the frank Mrs. Mayfield, "if you go to that; but it is a common saying that 'a good name is before life,' and that is what the old man meant."

"I wonder you should take any notice of what that old man says, and above all his daughter."

"His daughter, Mr. Hickman! Why, I never mentioned his daughter, for my part. You have been and put your own bricks on my foundation."

Hickman looked confused.

"You are a fool, Richard Hickman! You have told me more than I knew, and I see more than you tell me. You have led that girl astray, and deserted her likely, you little scamp!" (Hickman was five foot ten.)

"Nonsense!" put in Hickman. "That Rachael shall never come between you and me; but I'll tell you who the girl stands between: you and your Robert, that the farmer wants to put in the traces with you against his will."

"You are a liar!" cried Rose Mayfield, coloring to her temples.

Hickman answered coolly, "Thank you for the compliment, Rose. No, it is the truth. You see, when a man is wrapped up in a woman, as I am in you, he finds out everything that concerns her; and your boy Tom tells me that Robert is as fond of her as a cow of a calf."

"He fond of that Rachael! No!"

"Why, Rachael is a well-looking lass, if you go to that."

"And so she is," pondered Mrs. Mayfield; and in a moment many little circumstances in Robert's conduct became clear by this new light Hickman had given her. She struggled, and recovered her outward composure. "Well," said she, stoutly, "what is it to me?"

"Why, not much, I hope. Give me your hand, Rose; *I* don't fancy any girl but you. And name the day, if you will be so good."

"No, no!" said Rose Mayfield, nearly crying with vexation. "I won't marry any of you, a set of rogues and blockheads. And if it is true, I don't thank you for telling me. You are a sly, spiteful dog, and I don't care how often you ride past my house without hooking bridle to the gate, Dick Hickman."

Hickman bit his lips, but he kept his temper. "What! all this because Bob Hathorn's taste is not so good as mine! Ought I to suffer for his folly?"

"Oh, it is not for that, don't think it. But I don't want a lover that has ruined other women; it is not lucky, to say the least."

"What, all this because a girl jumped into my arms one day! Why, I am not so hard upon you. I hear tales about you, you know, but I only laugh — even about Frank Fairfield and you. (Mrs. Mayfield gave a

little start.) Neither you nor I are angels, you know. Why should we be hard on one another?"

Mrs. Mayfield, red as fire, interrupted him. "My faults, if I have any, have hurt me only; but yours never hurt you, and ruined others; and you say no more about me than you know, or you will get a slap in the mouth — and — there's my door; you take it at a word, and I'll excuse any further visits from *you*, Mr. Hickman."

These words, with a finger pointing to the door, and a flashing eye, left nothing for Hickman but to retire, which he did boiling with indignation, mortification, and revenge. "This is all along of Rachael. She has blown me," muttered he between his teeth. "I have got the bag; you sha'n't gain anything by it, Rachael!"

It will be remembered that when Patrick lay dying or dead, as supposed, this Hickman had a good impulse, and told Rachael he would never desert her: in this he was perfectly sincere at the moment. People utterly destitute of principle abound in impulses. They have good impulses, which come to nothing or next to nothing; and bad impulses, which they put in practice.

Mr. Hickman had time to think over his good impulse, and, accordingly, he thought better of it, and found that Rose Mayfield was too great a prize to resign. He therefore kept out of the way more than a week (a suspicious circumstance, which Mrs. Mayfield did not fail to couple with old Patrick's words), and his pity for Rachael evaporated in all that time. "What the worse is she for me now? Hang her, I offered her money, and what not; but I suppose nothing will serve her turn but hooking me for life, or else having her spite out, and spilling my milk for me here."

It was a fixed notion in this man's mind, that Rachael would do all she could to ruin his suit with Mrs. May-

field, and when he got the "sack," or, as he vulgarly called it, "the bag," he attributed it, in spite of Rose Mayfield's denial, to some secret revelation on Rachael's part, and a furious impulse to be revenged on her took possession of him.

Now this bad impulse, unlike his good one, had no time to cool. As he went towards the stable, in luck would have it he should meet Robert Hathorn. At sight of him our worthy acted upon his impulse. Robert, who was coming hastily from his father, with his brow knit and his countenance flushed, would have passed Hickman with the usual greeting, but Hickman would not let him off so easily.

"What, so you have got my old lass here still, Master Robert?"

"Your old lass! Not that I know of."

"Rachael Wright, you know."

"Rachael Wright, your lass!"

"Ay! and a very nice lass too, till we fell out. She gave me a broad hint just now, but I am for higher game. You could not lend me a spur, could you, Mr. Robert? Mine is broken."

"No."

"Never mind; good-morning, good-morning!"

Hickman's looks and contemptuous tones had eked out the few words with which he had stabbed Robert, and, together with the libertine character of the man, had effectually blackened Rachael in Robert's eyes.

This done, away went the poisoner, and chuckled as he went.

Robert Hathorn stood pale as death, looking after him. To this stupefaction succeeded a feeling of sickness, and a sense of despair, and Robert sat down upon the shaft of an empty cart, and gazed with stony eye upon the ground at his feet. His feelings were inexpressibly

bitter. Where was he to hope to find a woman he could respect, if this paragon was a girl of loose conduct? Then came remorse: for this Rachael he had this moment all but quarrelled with his father — their first serious misunderstanding. After a fierce struggle with himself, he forced himself to see that she must be wrenched out of his heart. He rose, pale but stern, after a silent agony that lasted a full hour, though to him it seemed but a minute, and went and looked after his father. He found him in the barn watching the threshers, but like one who did not see what he was looking at. His countenance was fallen and sad; the great and long-cherished wish of his heart had been shaken, and by his son; and then he had given that son bitter and angry words, and threatened him; and that son had answered respectfully, but firmly as iron, and the old man's heart began to sink.

He looked up, and there was Robert pale and stern, looking steadfastly at him with an expression he quite misunderstood. Old Hathorn lifted his head, and said sharply and bitterly to his son, —

"Well?"

"Father," said Robert, in a languid voice, "I am come to ask your pardon."

Farmer Hathorn looked astonished. Robert went on:

"I'll marry any woman you like, father — they are all one to me now."

"Why, what is the matter, Bob? that is too much the other way."

"And if I said anything to vex you, forgive me, father, if *you* please."

"No, no, no!" cried old Hathorn, "no more about it, Bob; there was no one to blame but my hasty temper — no more about it. Why, if the poor chap hasn't taken it quite to heart, hasn't a morsel of color left in his cheek!"

"Never mind my looks," gasped Robert.

"And don't you mind my words either then. Robert, you have made me happier than I have been any time this twenty years."

"I am glad of it," faltered Robert. "I'll look to this if you have anything else to do." He wanted to be alone.

"Thank you, Bob; I want to go into the village; keep up your heart, my lad. She is the best-looking woman I know, with the best heart *I* ever met, and I am older than you: and you see the worst of her the first day; her good part you are never at the bottom of; it is just the contrary with the sly ones. There, there! I'll say no more. Good-by." And away went the old farmer, radiant.

"Be happy," sobbed Robert; "I am glad there is one happy." And he sat down cold as a stone in his father's place. After awhile he rose and walked listlessly about, till at last his feet carried him through habit into his father's kitchen; on entering it his whole frame took a sudden thrill, for he found Rachael there tying up her bundle for a journey. She had heard his step, and her head was turned away from the door; but near her was a small round, old-fashioned mirror, and glancing into this Robert saw that tears were stealing down her face.

CHAPTER IV.

Old Hathorn paced down the village with his oak stick, a happy man; but for all that he was a little mystified. But two hours ago Robert had told him he loved Rachael, and had asked his leave to marry her, and in answer to his angry, or to speak more correctly, his

violent refusal, had told him his heart was bound up in her, and he would rather die than marry any other woman. What could have worked such a sudden change in the young man's mind? "Maybe I shall find out," was his concluding reflection; and he was right; he did find out, and the information came from a most unexpected quarter. As he passed the village public-house he was hailed from the parlor-window; he looked up, and at it was Farmer Hickman, mug in hand. Now, to tell the truth, Hathorn was not averse to ale, especially at another man's expense, and, thought he, "Farmer is getting beery, looks pretty red in the face; I'll see if I can't pump something out of him about him and Rose." So he joined Hickman; and in about half an hour he also was redder in the face than nature intended.

If the wit is out when the wine is in, what must it be when the beer is in?

Old Hathorn and Hickman were much freer over their glass than they had ever been before, and Hathorn pumped Hickman; but inasmuch as Hickman desired to be pumped, and was rather cunninger half-drunk than sober, the old farmer drew out of him nothing about Rose, but he elicited an artful and villanous mixture of truth and falsehood about Rachael Wright; it was not a vague sketch like that with which he had destroyed Robert's happiness; it was a long, circumstantial history, full of discolored truths and equivoques, and embellished with one or two good honest lies; but of these there were not many; poor Richard could not be honest even in dealing with the Devil: a great error; since that personage is not to be cheated; honesty is your only card in any little transaction with him. The symposium broke up. Hickman's horse was led round; he mounted, bade Hathorn good day, and went off. In passing the

farm his red face turned black, and he shook his fist at it, and said, —

"Fight it out now amongst ye." And the poisoner cantered away.

In leading Robert Hathorn and others so far, we have shot ahead of some little matters which must not be left behind, since without them the general posture which things had reached when Robert found Rachael tying up her bundle could hardly be understood.

When Mrs. Mayfield gave Hickman "the sack," or as that coarse young man called it, "the bag," she was in a towering passion, and not being an angel, but a female with decided virtues and abominable faults, she was just now in anything but a Christian temper, and woe to all who met her!

The first adventurer was Mr. Casenower: he saw her at a distance, for she had come out of the house in which she found she could hardly breathe, and came towards her with a face all wreathed in smiles. Mr. Casenower had of late made many tenders of his affection to her, which she had parried by positively refusing to see anything more than a jest in them; but Casenower, who was perfectly good-humored and light-hearted, had taken no offence at this, nor would he consider this sort of thing a refusal; in short, he told her plainly that it gave him great pleasure to afford her merriment, even at his own expense; only he should not leave off hoping until she took his proposal into serious consideration; that done, and his fate seriously pronounced, he told her she should find he was too much of a gentleman not to respect a lady's will: only, when the final "No" was pronounced, he should leave the farm, since he could not remain in it and see its brightest attraction given to another. Here he caught her on the side of her good-nature, and she replied, "Well, I am not anybody's yet."

She said to herself, "The poor soul seems happy here, with his garden, and his farm of two acres, and his nonsense: and why drive the silly goose away before the time?" So she suspended the final "No," and he continued to offer admiration, and she to laugh at it.

It must be owned, moreover, that she began, at times, to have a sort of humorous terror of this man. A woman knows by experience that it is the fate of a woman not to do what she would like, and to do just what she would rather not, and often, though apparently free, to be fettered by cobwebs, and driven into some unwelcome corner by whips of gossamer. One day Mesdames Hathorn and Mayfield had looked out of the parlor-window into the garden, and there they saw Mr. Casenower, running wildly among the beds, with his hat in his hand.

"What is up now?" said Mrs. Mayfield, scornfully.

"I dare say it is a butterfly," was the answer; "he collects them."

"What a fool he is!"

"He is a good soul, for all that."

"Fools mostly are — Jane!" said Mrs. Mayfield, very solemnly.

"Yes, Rose!"

"Look at that man; look at him well, if *you* please. Of all the men that pester me, that is the one that is the most ridiculous in my eye. Ha! ha! the butterfly has got safe over the wall, I'm so glad; — Jane!"

"Well!"

"You mark my word — I sha'n't have the butterfly's luck."

"What do you mean?"

"That man is to be my husband! — that is all."

"La, Rose, how can you talk so? you know he is the last man you will ever take."

"Of course he is, and so he will take me; I feel he will; I can't bear the sight of him, so he is sure to be the man; you will see!—you will see!" and casting on her cousin a look that was a marvellous compound of fun and bitterness, she left the room brusquely, with one savage glance flung over her shoulder into the garden.

I do not say that such misgivings were frequent; this was once in a way; still it is characteristic, and the reader is entitled to it.

Mr. Casenower then came to Mrs. Mayfield, and presented her with a clove pink from his garden; he took off his hat with a flourish, and said, with an innocent but somewhat silly playfulness, "Accept this, fair lady, in token that some day you will accept the grower."

The gracious lady replied by slapping the pink out of his hand, and saying, "That is how I accept the pair."

Mr. Casenower colored very high, and the water came into his eyes; but Mrs. Mayfield turned her back on him, and flounced into her own house. When there, she felt she had been harsh, and looking out of the window, she saw poor Casenower standing dejected on the spot where she had left him; she saw him stoop and pick up the pink; he eyed it sorrowfully, placed it in his bosom, and then moved droopingly away.

"What a brute I am!" was the Mayfield's first reflection. "I hate you!" was the second.

So then, being discontented with herself, she accumulated bitterness, and in this mood flounced into the garden, for she saw Mrs. Hathorn there. When she reached her, she found that her cousin was looking at Rachael, who was cutting spinach for dinner while the old corporal, seated at some little distance, watched his granddaughter; and as he watched her, his dim eye lighted every now and then with affection and intelligence.

Mrs. Mayfield did not look at the picture; all she saw was Rachael; and after a few trivial words, she said to Mrs. Hathorn in an undertone, but loud enough to be heard by Rachael, "Are these two going to live with us altogether?"

Mrs. Hathorn did not answer; she colored and cast a deprecating look at her cousin: Rachael rose from her knees, and said to Patrick in an undertone, the exact counterpart of Mrs. Mayfield's: "Grandfather, we have been here long enough, come" — and she led him into the house.

There is a dignity in silent unobtrusive sorrow, and some such dignity seemed to belong to this village girl Rachael, and to wait upon all she said or did; and this seemed to put everybody in the wrong who did or said anything against her. When she led off her grandfather with those few firm sad words, in the utterance of which she betrayed no particle of anger or pique, Mrs. Hathorn cast a glance of timid reproach at her cousin, and she herself turned paler directly; but she replied to Mrs. Hathorn's look only by a disdainful toss of the head, and not choosing to talk upon the subject, she flounced in again and shut herself up in her own parlor — there she walked up and down like a little hyena. Presently she caught sight of the old farmer, standing like a statue, near the very place where Robert had left him after announcing his love for Rachael and his determination to marry no other woman. At sight of the farmer, an idea struck Mrs. Mayfield — "That Hickman is a liar after all; don't let me be too hasty in believing all this about Robert and that girl. I'll draw the farmer."

"I'll draw the farmer!" my refined reader is looking to me to explain the lady's phraseology. That which in country parlance is called "drawing," is also an art, O pencil — men that have lived thirty or forty years and

done business in this wicked world, learn to practise it at odd times. Women have not to wait for that; it is born with most of them an instinct, not an art. It works thus: you suspect something, but you don't know: you catch some one who does know, and you talk to him as if you knew all about it. Then, if he is not quite on his guard, he lets out what you wanted to know.

Mrs. Mayfield walked up to Hathorn with a great appearance of unpremeditated wrath, and said to him, "A fine fool you have been making of me, pretending your Robert looked my way, when he is over head and ears in love with that Rachael."

"Oh!" cried the farmer, "what, the fool has been and told you too!"

"So it is true, then?" cried the Mayfield sharply.

Machiavel No. 2 saw his mistake too late, and tried to hark back. "No: he is not over head and ears; it is all nonsense and folly; it will pass. You set your back to mine, and we will soon bring the ninny to his senses."

"I back you to force your son my way!" cried Rose in a fury; "what do I care for your son, or you either? Let him marry his Rachael. The donkey will find whether your mock-modest ones are better or worse than the frank ones — ha, ha!"

"Rose," cried the farmer, illumined with sudden hope, "if you know anything against her, you tell me, and I'll tell Robert."

"No," said she, throwing up her nose into the air in a manner pretty to behold; "I am no scandal-monger. It is your affair, not mine. Let him marry his Rachael. Ha, ha, oh!" and off she went, laughing with malice and choking with vexation.

There now remained to insult only Robert and Mrs. Hathorn. But the virago was afraid to scold Mrs. Hathorn, who she knew would burst out crying at the

first hard word, and then she would have to beg the poor soul's pardon; and Robert she could not find just then. Poor fellow, at this very moment he was writhing under Hickman's insinuations, and tearing his own heart to pieces in his efforts to tear Rachael from it.

So the Mayfield ran up-stairs to her own bedroom and locked herself in; for she did not want sense, and she began to see and feel that she was hardly safe to be about.

Meantime Rachael had come to take leave of Mrs. Hathorn. That good lady remonstrated, but feebly. She felt that there would never be peace now till the poor girl was gone. But she insisted upon one thing, — the old man, in his weak state, should not go on foot.

"You are free to go or stay for me, Rachael," said she, "but if you go, I will not have any harm come to the poor old man within ten miles of this door."

So, to get away, Rachael consented to take a horse and cart of the farmer's, and this is how it came about that Robert found Rachael tying up her bundle of clothes. Her tears fell upon her little bundle as she tied it.

CHAPTER V.

Robert Hathorn had found in Hickman's insinuations a natural solution of all that had puzzled him in Rachael. She was the deserted mistress of a man whom she still loved. Acting on this, he apologized to his father, placed his future fate with heart-sick indifference in that father's hands, and despaired of the female sex, and resigned all hope of heart-happiness in this world. But all this time Rachael had been out of sight. She stood now before him in person, and the sight of her, beautiful, retiring,

submissive, sorrowful, smote his heart and bewildered his mind. Looking at her, he could not see the possibility of this creature having ever been Hickman's mistress. He accused himself of having been too hasty. He would have given worlds to recall the words that had made his father so happy, and was even on the point of leaving the kitchen to do so; but, on second thoughts, he determined to try and learn from Rachael herself whether there was any truth in Hickman's scandal, and if there was, to think of her no more.

"What are you doing, Rachael?"

"I am tying up my things to go, Master Robert."

"To go?"

"Yes. We have been a burden to your mother some time; still, as I did the work of the house, I thought my grandfather would not be so very much in the way. But I got a plain hint from Mrs. Mayfield just now."

"Confound her!"

"No, sir; we are not to forget months of kindness for a moment of ill-humor. So I am going, Mr. Robert, and now I have only to thank you for all your kindness and civility. We are very grateful, and wish we could make a return, but that is not in our power. But grandfather is an old man near his grave, and he shall pray for you by name every night, and so will I; so then, as we are very poor, and have no hopes but from Heaven, it is to be thought the Almighty will hear us, and bless you, sleeping and waking, for being so good to the unfortunate."

Robert hid his face in his hands a moment. This was the first time she had ever spoken to him so warmly and so sweetly, and at what a moment of dark suspicion had these words come to him. Robert recovered himself, and said to Rachael, "Are you sure that is the real cause of your leaving us so sudden?"

Rachael looked perplexed. "Indeed, I think so, Mr. Robert. At least, I should not have gone this very day but for that."

"Ah, but you know very well you had made up your mind to go before that."

"Of course I looked to go some day. We don't belong here, grandfather and I."

"That is not it either. Rachael, there is an ill report sprung up about you."

"What is that, sir?" said Rachael, with apparent coldness.

"What is it? How can I look in your face and say anything to wound you?"

"Thank you, Mr. Robert. I am glad there is one that is inclined to show me some respect."

"Do something for me in return, dear Rachael; tell me your story, and I'll believe your way of telling it, not another's; but if you will tell me nothing, what can I do but believe the worst, impossible as it seems? Why are you so sorrowful? Why are you so cold like?"

"I have nothing to tell you, Mr. Robert; if any one has maligned me, may Heaven forgive them; if you believe them, forget me. I am going away. Out of sight, out of mind."

"What! can a girl like you, that has won all our respects, go away and leave scandal behind her? No! stay, and face it out, and let us put it down forever."

"Why should I trouble myself to do that, sir?"

"Because, if you do not, those who love you can love you no more."

Rachael sighed, but she wrapped herself in coldness, and replied, "But I want no one to love me."

"You don't choose that any one should ever marry you then?"

"No, Mr. Robert, I do not."

"You would not answer Richard Hickman so!"

"Richard Hickman!" said Rachael, turning pale.

When she turned pale, Robert turned sick.

"He says as much as that you could not say 'No' to him."

"Richard Hickman speaks of me to you!" cried Rachael, opening her eyes wildly. Then in a moment she was ice again. "Well, I do not speak of him!"

"Rachael," cried Robert, "what is all this? For heaven's sake, be frank with me. Don't make me tear the words out of you so; give me something to believe, or something to forgive. I should believe anything you told me: I am afraid I should forgive anything you had done."

"I do not ask you to do either, sir."

"She will drive me mad!" cried Robert frantically. "Rachael, hear me. I love you more than a woman was ever loved before! You talk of being grateful to me. I don't know why you should, but you say so. If you are, be generous, be merciful. I leave it to you. Be my wife! and then, perhaps, you will not lock your heart and your story from your husband. I cannot believe ill of you. You may have been maligned, or you may have been deceived, but you cannot be guilty. There!" cried he, wildly, "no word but one! Will you be my wife, Rachael?"

Rachael did not answer, at least in words; she wept silently.

Robert looked at her despairingly. At last he repeated his proposal almost fiercely: "I ask you, Rachael, will you be my wife?"

As he repeated this question, who should stand in the doorway but Mrs. Mayfield! She was transfixed, petrified, at these words of Robert, but, being a proud woman,

her impulse was to withdraw instantly, and hear no more. Ere she was out of hearing, however, Rachael replied, —

"Forgive me, Mr. Robert. I must refuse you."

"You refuse to be my wife?"

"I do, sir!" but still she wept.

Mrs. Mayfield, as she retreated, heard the words, but did not see the tears. Robert saw the tears, but could not understand them. He gave a hasty, despairing gesture, to show Rachael that he had no more to say to her, and then he flung himself into a chair, and laid his brow on the table. Rachael glided softly away. At the door she looked back on Robert with her eyes thick with tears. She had hardly been gone a minute when Rose Mayfield returned, and came in and sat gently down opposite Robert, and watched him intently, with a countenance in which the most opposite feelings might be seen struggling for the mastery.

CHAPTER VI.

Robert lifted his head, and saw Mrs. Mayfield. He spoke to her sullenly: "So you turn away our servants?"

"Not I," replied Mrs. Mayfield sharply.

"It is not we that send away Rachael, it is you."

"I tell you, no; do you believe that girl before me?"

"You affronted her. What had she done to you?"

"I only just asked her, how long she meant to stay here, or something like that. Hang me if I remember what I said to her! They are a bad breed all these girls, haughty and spiteful; you can't say a word, but they snap your head off." Mrs. Mayfield said no more, for

at that moment Rachael came into the room with her grandfather and Mrs. Hathorn: this last appeared to be smoothing matters down.

"No, Daddy Patrick," said she in answer to some observation of the old man's, "nobody sends you away; you leave us good friends, and you are going to drink a cup of ale with us before you go."

A tray was then brought in and a jug of ale, and Patrick drank his mug of ale slowly; but Rachael put hers to her lips and set it down again.

Then Robert went and sat on the window-seat, and there he saw them bringing round the wagon to carry away Rachael and her grandfather. His heart turned dead-sick within him. He looked round for help, and looking round he saw Mrs. Mayfield bending on him a look in which he seemed to read some compassion, blended with a good deal of pique. In his despair he appealed to her: "There, they are really going; is it fair to send away like that folk that have behaved so well, and were minded to go of themselves, only mother asked them to stay? See how that makes us look; and you that were always so kind-hearted, Mrs. Mayfield. Rose, dear Rose!"

Mrs. Mayfield did not answer Robert, whose appeal was made to her in an undertone, but she said to Mrs. Hathorn, "Jane, the house is yours; keep them if it suits you, I am sure it is no business of mine."

"Oh, thank you, Rose," cried Robert; but his thanks were cut short by the voice of the elder Hathorn, who had just come in from the yard. "They are going," said he, "I make no complaint against them. There is no ill-will on either side; but I say they ought to go, and go they shall."

"Go they shall!" said the old corporal, with a mystified look.

The farmer spoke with a firmness and severity, and even with a certain dignity, and all felt he was not in a mood to be trifled with. Robert answered humbly — "Father, you are master here; no one gainsays you — but you are a just man. If you were to be cruel to the poor and honest, you would be sorry for it all your days."

Before the farmer could answer, Rose Mayfield put in hastily, —

"There, bid them stay — you see your son holds to the girl, you will have to marry them one day or other, and so best — that will put an end to all the nonsense they talk about the boy and me. I dare say Robert is fool enough to think I wanted him for myself."

"I — Mrs. Mayfield? Never. What makes you fancy that?"

"And," cried Mrs. Mayfield, as if a sudden light broke in upon her, "what are we all doing here? we can't help folks' hearts. — Robert loves her. Are we to persecute Robert, an innocent lad, that never offended one of us, and has been a good son to you, and a good friend and brother to me ever since we could walk? I think the Devil must have got into my heart: but I shall turn him out, whether he likes or no. I say he shall have the girl, old man; and more than that, I have got a thousand pounds loose in Wallingford Bank: they shall have it to stock a farm; it is little enough to give Robert — I owe him more than that for Drayton, let alone years of love and good-will. There now, he is going to cry, I suppose. — Bob, don't cry, for heaven's sake; I can't abide to see a man cry."

"It is you make me, Rose, praising me just when everybody seemed to turn against me."

"You are crying yourself, Rose," whimpered Mrs. Hathorn.

"If I am, I don't feel it," replied Mrs. Mayfield.

Rachael trembled — but she said in her low, firm voice, "We are going away of our own accord, Mistress Mayfield, and we thank you kindly for this, and for all — but we are going away."

"You don't love Robert, then?"

"No, Mrs. Mayfield," said Rachael, with the air of one confessing theft or sacrilege, "I don't love Mr. Robert!" and she lowered her eyes with their long lashes, and awaited her sentence.

"Tell that to the men," replied Rose; "you can't draw the wool over a sister's eye, young lady."

"The young woman is the only one among you that has a grain of sense," said old Hathorn roughly. "Why don't you let her alone? — she would thank you for it."

"Can you read a woman's words, you old ass?" was the contemptuous answer.

"I am not an ass, young woman," said Hathorn gravely and sternly, "and I am in my house, which you seem to forget" — Rose colored up to the eyes — "and I am the master of it, so long as it is your pleasure I should be here."

"John!" cried Mrs. Mayfield, with a deprecating air.

"And I am that young man's father, and it is his duty to listen to me, and mine not to let him make a fool of himself. I don't pretend to be so particular as Robert is — used to be, I mean — and I was telling him only yesterday, that, suppose you have kicked over the traces a bit, as you have never broken your knees, leastways to our *knowledge*, Rose, it did not much matter."

"Thank you, Daddy Hathorn; much obliged to you, I am sure."

"But there's reason in roasting of eggs: this one has been off the course altogether, and therefore I say again, she shows sense by going home, and you show no sense by trying to keep her here."

"Father," said Robert, "you go too far; we know nothing against Rachael, and till I know I won't believe anything."

"Why, Bob, I thought Hickman had told you all about it — I understood him so — ay, and he must too, or why did you come to me in the yard, and eat umble pie?"

"I don't know what you mean by telling me all about it, father; he hinted as much as that he and Rachael had been too familiar once upon a time."

"Well?"

"Well, how often has he told me the same of a dozen others? that is a common trick of Dick Hickman's, to pretend he has been thick with a girl, that perhaps does not know his face from Adam's. Father, I can't believe a known liar's tongue, against such a face as that."

"Face as that! it is a comely one, but seems to me it does not look us so very straight in the face just now; and there's more than a liar's tongue on t'other side: there's chapter and verse as the saying is."

"I don't understand your hints, and I don't believe that blackguard's. I am not so old as you, but I have learned that truth does not lie in hints."

"I'm older than you, and a woman's face can't make me blind and deaf to better witnesses."

"There are no better witnesses! For shame, father! Hickman is no authority with Hathorn."

"But the parish register is an authority," cried the old man sternly, and losing all his patience.

"The parish register?"

"And if you look at the parish register of Long Compton, you will find the name of a child she is the mother of, and no father to show."

"Father!"

"Ask herself — you see she doesn't deny it."

All eyes turned and fastened upon Rachael; and those who saw her at this moment will carry her face and her look to their graves, so fearful was the anguish of a high spirit ground into the dust and shame; her body seemed that moment to be pierced with a hundred poisoned arrows. She rose, white to her very lips, and stood in the midst of them quivering like an aspen-leaf, her eyes preternaturally bright and large, and she took one uncertain step forward, as if to fling herself on the weapons of scorn that seemed to hem her in; and she opened her mouth to speak, but her open lips trembled and trembled, and no sound came. And all the hearts round, even the old farmer's, began now to freeze and fear at the sight of this wild agony; and at last, after many efforts the poor soul would have said something, God knows what, but a sudden and most unexpected interruption came. Corporal Patrick was by her side, nobody saw how, and seizing her firmly by the arm, he forbade her to speak.

"Silence, girl!" cried the old soldier fiercely. "I dare you to say a word to any of them."

Then Rachael turned and clung convulsively to his shoulder, and trembled and writhed there in silence. All this while they had not observed the old man, or they would have seen that the mist had gradually cleared away from his faculties; his mind, brightened by his deep love for Rachael, was keenly awake to all that concerned her; and so her old champion stood in a moment by her side with scarce a sign left of age or weakness, upright and firm as a tower.

"Silence, girl! I dare you to say a word to any of them."

"There," sobbed Mrs. Hathorn, "you thought the poor old man was past understanding, and now you make him drink the bitter cup as well as her."

"Yes, I must drink my cup too," said old Patrick. "I thought I was going to die soon, and to die in peace; but I'll live and be young again, if it is but to tell ye ye are a pack of curs. The parish register! does the parish register tell you, the man married her with a wife living in another part? Is it wrote down along with that child's name in the parish register, how his father fell on his knees to his mother, a girl of seventeen, and begged for the dear life she wouldn't take the law of him and banish him the country? What was she to think? Could she think, that when his sick wife died he'd reward her for sparing him by flying the country not to do her right? The parish register! You welcome this scoundrel to your house, and you hunt his victim out like a vagabond, ye d——d hypocrites. Come, Rachael, let us crawl away home, and die in peace."

"No, no! you must not go like that," cried Mrs. Hathorn, and Robert rose and was coming to take his hand; but he waved his staff furiously over his head.

"Keep aloof, I bid ye all," he cried; "I have fought against Bonaparte, and I despise *small* blackguards." He seized Rachael and drew her to the door: then he came back at them again: "'Tisn't guilt you have punished; you have insulted innocence and hard fortune; you have insulted your own mothers, for you have insulted me that fought for them before the best and oldest of you was born — no skulking before the enemy, girl," — for Rachael was drooping and trembling — "Right shoulders forward — MARCH!" and he almost tore her out of the house. He was great, and thundering, and terrible, in this moment of fury; he seemed a giant, and the rest but two feet high. His white hair streamed, and his eyes blazed defiance and scorn. He was great and terrible by his passion and his age, and his confused sense of past battles and present insult.

They followed him out almost on tiptoe. He lifted Rachael into the wagon, placed her carefully on a truss of hay in the wagon, and the carter came to the horses' heads, and looked to the house to know whether he was to start now.

Robert came out and went to Rachael's side of the wagon, but she turned her head away.

"Won't you speak to me, Rachael?" said Robert.

Rachael turned her head away and was silent.

"Very well," said Robert quietly, very quietly.

"Go on," cried old Hathorn.

The next moment there was a fearful scream from the women, and Robert was seen down among the horses' feet, and the carter was forcing them back, or the wagon would have been over him; the carter dragged him up; he was not hurt, but very pale; he told his mother, who came running to him, that he had felt suddenly faint and had fallen, and he gave a sickly smile and bade her not be frightened — he was better.

Rose Mayfield was as white as a sheet.

"Go on," cried the farmer again, and at a word from the carter the horses drew the wagon out of the yard, and went away down the lane with Rachael and Patrick.

They were gone.

CHAPTER VII.

Corporal Patrick was correct in his details; the parish register gave a very vague outline of Rachael Wright's history. Mr. Hickman had gone through the ceremony of marrying her; nay, more, at the time he had firmly intended the ceremony should be binding, for his wife lay dying a hundred miles off, and Rachael had at

this period great expectations from her aunt, Mrs. Clayton. This Mrs. Clayton was the possessor of Bix Farm. She was a queer-tempered woman, and a severe economist; this did not prevent her allowing Patrick and Rachael a yearly sum, which helped to maintain them in homely comfort. And she used to throw out mysterious hints that, at her death, the pair would be better off than other relations of hers who dressed finer and held their heads higher at present. Unfortunately for Rachael this aunt was alive at the period when Hickman's bigamy was discovered by old Patrick. The said aunt had never done anything of the kind herself, nobody had ever married her illegally, and she could not conceive how such a thing could take place without the woman being in fault as well as the man; so she was very cross about it, and discontinued her good offices. The corporal wished to apply the law at once to Hickman; but he found means to disarm Rachael, and Rachael disarmed the old soldier. Rachael, young, inexperienced, and honest, was easily induced to believe in Hickman's penitence, and she never doubted that upon his wife's death, who was known to be incurably ill, Richard would do her ample right. So meantime she agreed to do herself injustice.

Mrs. Hickman died within a short time of the exposure; but unfortunately for Rachael, another person died a week or two before her, and that person was Rachael's aunt. No will appeared, except an old one which was duly cancelled by the old lady herself, in the following manner: First, all the words were inked out with a pen; secondly, most of them were scratched out with a knife; lastly, a formal document was affixed and witnessed, rendering the said instrument null as well as illegible. The mutilated testament bequeathed Bix Farm to Jack White, her graceless nephew. He had offended her after

the will was made, so she annulled the will. The graceless nephew could afford to smile at these evidences of wrath; he happened to be her heir-at-law, and succeeded to Bix in the absence of all testament to the contrary. Hickman was with his dying wife in Somersetshire. The news about Bix reached him, and he secretly resolved to have nothing more to do with Rachael. To carry out this with more security, the wretch wrote her affectionate letters from time to time, giving plausible excuses for remaining in Somersetshire; and so he carried on the game for three months after his wife was dead; he then quietly dropped the mask, and wrote no more.

So matters went on for some years, until one day the graceless nephew, finding work a bore, announced Bix Farm to let. Poor Hickman had set his heart upon this Bix, and as he could not have it for his own, he thought he should like to rent it, so he came up and made his offer, and was accepted as tenant. The rest the reader knows, I believe; but what iron passed through the hearts of Rachael and the old soldier all this time, that let me hope he knows not.

CHAPTER VIII.

The events we have recorded had no sooner taken place, than a great change seemed to come over Mrs. Mayfield. She went about her avocations as usual, but not with the same alacrity; and her spirits were so unstrung, that every now and then she burst into tears. The female servants, honest country wenches that were not sublimely indifferent, like London domestics, to everybody in the house but themselves, seeing the gloom of the house, and Mrs. Mayfield continually cry-

ing who never cried before, began to whimper for sympathy, and the house was a changed house. Robert had disappeared; and they all felt it was a charity not to ask where, or to go near him for awhile: all but the mother, who could not resist the yearnings of a mother's nature; she crept silently at a distance, and watched her boy, lest perchance evil should befall him.

Mrs. Mayfield then, after many efforts to go through her usual duties, gave way altogether, and sat herself down in her own parlor, and cried over all the sorrow that had come on the farm; and, as all generous natures do, if you give them time to think, she blamed herself more than any one else, and wished herself dead and out of the way, if by that means the rest could only be made happy as they used to be. While she was in this mood, her head buried in her hands, she heard a slight noise, and, looking up, saw a sorrowful face at the door: it was Mr. Casenower.

"I am come to bid you good-by, Mrs. Mayfield."

"Come to bid me good-by?"

"Yes. All my things are packed up except this, which I hope you will do me the favor to accept, since I am going away and shall never tease you again."

"You never teased me that I know," said Mrs. Mayfield, very gently. "What is it, sir?"

"It is my collection of birds' eggs: will you look at it?"

"Yes. Why, here are a hundred different sorts, and no two kinds alike."

"No two kinds? I should think not. No two eggs, you mean."

"How beautiful they look when you see them in such numbers!"

"They are beautiful. Nature is very skilful; we don't take half as many hints from her as we might. Do you

observe these eggs all of one color — these delicate blues —these exquisite drabs? If you ever wish to paint a room, take one of these eggs for a model, and you will arrive at such tints as no painter ever imagined out of his own head, I know. I once hoped we should make these experiments together; but it was not to be. Good-by, dear Mrs. Mayfield!"

"Oh! Mr. Casenower, I did not think you came to quarrel with me."

"Heaven forbid! But you love somebody else."

"No; I don't."

"Yes: you know you do; and you rejected me this morning."

"I remember I was rude to you, sir; I knocked a flower out of your hand. Does that rankle in your heart so long?"

"Mrs. Mayfield, it is for your sake I am going, not out of anger; you know that very well."

"I know no such thing: it is out of spite; and a pretty time to show your spite, when my heart is breaking. If you want to please me, you would wait till I bid you go."

"You don't bid me go, then?"

"It doesn't seem like it."

"You bid me stay?"

"Not I, sir. Don't let me keep you here against your will."

"But it is not against my will; only you seemed to hate me this morning."

"What signifies what I did this morning?" cried Mrs. Mayfield, sharply; "it is afternoon now. This morning they put me out; I wanted somebody to quarrel with: you came in my way, so I quarrelled with you. Now I have made you all unhappy, so I am miserable myself, as I deserve; and now I want somebody to com-

fort me, and you come to me: but instead of comforting me, all you can think of is to quarrel with me — oh! oh! oh!" This speech was followed by a flood of tears.

Casenower drew his chair close to hers, and took her hand, and promised to console her — to die for her if necessary.

"Tell me your trouble," said he, "and you shall see how soon I will cure it, if a friend can cure it. Mrs. Mayfield — Rose — what is the matter?"

"Dear Mr. Casenower, Robert is in love with that Rachael — the farmer has insulted her, and sent her and her grandfather away — Robert is breaking his heart; — and all this began with a word of mine, though that blackguard Hickman is more to blame still. But I am a woman that likes to make people happy about me; I may say I live for that; and now they are all unhappy; and if I knew where to find a dose of poison, I would not be long before I would take it this day. I can't bear to make folk unhappy — oh! oh! oh!"

"Don't cry, dearest," said Casenower; "you shall have your wish; you shall make everybody happy!"

"Oh, no, no! that is impossible now."

"No such thing — there is no mischief that can't be cured — look here, Rose, the old farmer is very fond of money; Rachael is poor; well, I am rich. I will soon find Robert a thousand pounds or two, and he shall have the girl he likes."

"Ah, Mr. Casenower, if money could do it I should have settled it that way myself. Oh! what a good creature you are. I love you — no, I don't, I hate you, because I see how all this is to end. No, no! we have insulted the poor things and set their hearts against us, and we have set poor Robert against the girl, who is worth the whole pack of us twice counted. They are gone, and the old man's curse hangs like lead upon the house, and all in it."

"Where are they gone?"

"Newbury way."

"How long?"

"An hour and a half."

"In two hours I'll have them back here."

"Don't be a fool now, talking nonsense."

"Will you lend me your mare?"

"Yes! no! The old farmer would kill us."

"Hang the old farmer! Who cares for him? Is this your house or his?"

"Mine, to be sure."

"Then I shall bring them to this house."

"Yes, but — but" —

"You have a right to do what you like in your own house, I suppose. Why, how scared you look! Where is all your spirit? You have plenty of it sometimes."

"Dear Mr. Casenower — don't tell anybody — I have not a grain of real spirit. I am the most chicken-hearted creature in the world: only I hide it when I fall in with other cowards, and so then I can bully them, you know. I have hectored it over you more than once, and so I would again; but it would be a shame, you are so good — and besides you have found me out now."

"Well! I am not afraid of anybody, if I can please you. I will ride after them and fetch them here, and if you are afraid to give them house-room, I will hire that empty house at the end of the lane, and this very night they shall be seated in a good house, by a good fire, before a good supper, within fifty yards of your door."

"Let me go with you. You don't know the way."

"Thank you; I should be sure to lose the way by myself; go and get your habit on. Lose no time. I will saddle the horses."

"How a man takes the command of us," thought Mrs. Mayfield. "I shall have to marry you for this, I suppose," said she, gayly, shining through her late tears.

"Not unless you like," said Casenower, proudly. "I don't want to entrap you, or take any woman against her will."

The Mayfield colored up to her eyes.

"You had better knock me down," said she. "I know you would like to," and, casting on her companion a glance of undisguised admiration, she darted up-stairs for her habit.

Ten minutes later she was in the saddle, and giving her mare the rein, she went after our poor travellers like a flash of lightning.

Casenower followed as he might.

CHAPTER IX.

It was a glorious evening: the sun, gigantic and red, had just begun to tip the clouds with gold, and rubies, and promises of a fine day to-morrow; the farm was quiet; the farmer's homely supper was set on a table outside the door, and he and his wife sat opposite each other in silence.

Mrs. Hathorn helped herself to a morsel; but she did not care to eat it, and, in fact, she only helped herself to encourage her husband to eat. She did not succeed; Farmer Hathorn remained in a brown study, his supper untasted before him.

"Eat your supper, husband."

"Thank you, wife; I am not hungry."

"Take a drop of beer, then."

"No, Jane, I am not dry."

"You are ill then, John; you don't look well."

"I'm well enough, I tell you."

"You are in trouble, like many more in this house."

"Me? No: I never was happier in my life."

"Indeed! What is there to be happy about?"

"Come, now, what is it?" cried the farmer, angrily. "Out with it, and don't sit looking at me with eyes like a adder's."

"My man, you see your conscience in your wife's eyes; that is all the venom they have."

"You had better tell me Robert is in his senses to love that girl. I would cut my arm off at the shoulder sooner than consent to it."

"Would you cut your son off sooner?" said Mrs. Hathorn, with forced calmness.

"What do you mean?"

"You take very little notice of what passes, John."

"What do you mean?"

"Didn't you see what Robert tried for when the wagon started with them?"

"Oh, about his fainting! I could have kicked the silly fool if I hadn't been his father."

"Don't you think it is very odd he should faint like that; just under the wheel of a wagon?"

"Oh! when a chap swoons away he can't choose the bed he falls on."

"A moment more, the wheel would have been on his head; if Thomas hadn't been lightsome[1] and stopped the horses all in a minute, Robert Hathorn would have been a corpse in this house."

"Well!"

"Well!"

The man lowered his voice: "You had better tell me you think he did it on purpose!"

[1] Pronounced lissome.

Mrs. Hathorn leaned over the table to him.

"I don't think it, John; I am sure of it. Robert never fainted at all; he was as white as his shirt, but he knew what he was about from first to last. He chose his time; and when Rachael turned her head from him, he just said, 'Very well, then,' and flung himself under the wheel. What did Thomas say, who dragged him up from the horses' feet?"

"I don't know," said old Hathorn, half sulkily, half trembling.

"He said, 'That is flying in the face of Heaven, young master.' Jane heard him say it; and you know Thomas is a man that speaks but little. What did Rose Mayfield say, as she passed him next minute? 'Would you kill your mother, Robert, and break all our hearts?' You cried out, 'Go on — go on.' Robert said his foot had slipped; and made as though he would smile at me. Ah! what a smile, John! If you had been as near it as I was, you wouldn't sleep this night." And Mrs. Hathorn began to sob violently, and rocked herself to and fro.

"Then send for them back," cried the farmer, suddenly starting up. "Send, before worse ill comes — confound them!"

"They will never come back here. They are poor, but honest and proud; and we have stung them too bitterly, reproaching them with their hard lot."

"Where is he?" whispered the farmer.

"In the barn; with his face buried in the straw, like one who wouldn't speak, or see, or hear the world again."

"Mayhap he is asleep?"

"No, he is not asleep."

"Give him time; he'll come-to when he has cried his bellyful."

"He shed tears? Oh, no! it is too deep for that; he

will die by his own hand, or fret to death. He won't be long here, I doubt: look for dark days, old man!"

"Wife," said Hathorn, trembling, "you are very hard upon me: to hear you, one would say I am a bad father, and am killing my son."

"No — no — John! But we were too ambitious, and we have humbled the poor and the afflicted; and Heaven does not bless them that do so, and never will."

"I don't know what to do, Jane."

"No more do I, except pray to God: that is my resource in dangers and troubles."

"Ay! ay! that can do no harm any way."

While the old couple sat there with gloomy and foreboding hearts, suddenly a cheerful cry burst upon their ears. It was Mrs. Mayfield's voice; she came cantering up the lane with Mr. Casenower; she dismounted, flung him the bridle, and ran into her own house, where she busied herself in giving orders and preparing two rooms for some expected visitors. A few minutes more, and, to the astonishment of Hathorn and delight of his wife, the wagon hove in sight with Rachael and Patrick.

They descended from the wagon, and were led by Mr. Casenower into Mrs. Mayfield's house, and there, after all this day's fatigues and sorrows, they found a welcome and bodily repose. But Rachael showed great uneasiness; she had been very reluctant to return; but Mrs. Mayfield had begged them both so hard, with the tears in her eyes, and Patrick had shown so strong a wish to come back, that she had yielded a passive consent. When the news of their return was brought to Robert by his mother, he betrayed himself to her; he threw his arms around her neck like a girl — but in his downcast look, and dogged manner, none of the others could discover whether he was glad or sorry. He went about his work, next morning, as usual, and did not even make an inquiry about Rachael.

It was about twelve o'clock the next day, that Mrs. Mayfield observed him return from the field, and linger longer than usual in the neighborhood of the house. She invited Rachael to come and look at her pet calf, and walked her most treacherously right up to Robert.

"Oh!" cried she, "you must excuse me, here is Robert, he will do as well. Robert, you take and show her my calf, the red and white one, that's a good soul; they want me in-doors." And in a moment she was gone, and left Robert and Rachael looking alternately at each other and the ground.

When Rose left these two together she thought, innocently enough, that the business was half done, as far as they were concerned. She had not calculated the characters of the parties, and their pride. They were little nearer each other now than at twenty miles distant.

"Well, Rachael," said Robert, "I am glad you are here again. They were wrong to insult you, and now they are right to bring you back; but it is no business of mine."

"No, Master Robert," said Rachael quietly, "and it is against my will I am here."

With these words she was moving away, when Robert intercepted her, and, intercepting her, said, "Oh! I don't hinder you to stay or to go. The folk say a heap of things about you and me; but did I ever say a word to you more than civility?"

"No; nor would I have suffered it."

"Oh, you are proud; it suits your situation," said Robert bitterly.

"A man and a Christian would think twice ere he reminded me of my situation," cried Rachael, with flashing eyes; "and since you can't feel for it, why speak to me at all?"

"I did not mean to affront you," said Robert, with feeling. "I pity you."

"Keep your pity for one that asks it," was the spirited reply.

"What! are we to worship you?"

"Misfortune that does not complain should meet some little respect, I think."

"Yes, Rachael; but it would be more respected if you had not kept it so close."

"Master Robert," answered Rachael, in what we have already described as her dogged manner, "poor folk must work, and ought to work; and, as they won't let a girl in my situation, as you call it, do work or be honest, I concealed my fault, if fault it was of mine."

"And I call it cruel to let a man love you, and hide your story from him."

"Nay, but I never encouraged any man to love me, so I owe my story to no man."

"Keep your secrets, then," said Robert, savagely; "nobody wants them, without it is Richard Hickman. I hear his cursed voice in the air somewhere."

"Richard Hickman!" gasped Rachael. "Oh, why did I come to this place to be tortured again?"

Richard Hickman had come here expressly to have a friendly talk with Mr. Patrick. Mr. Patrick owed this honor to the following circumstance: —

As the wagon returned to the farm, Thomas had stopped at a certain wayside public-house in which Mr. Hickman happened to be boozing. Patrick was breathing threats against Hickman, and insisting on Rachael's taking the law of him, and sending him out of the country. Rachael, to get rid of the subject, yielded a languid assent, and Hickman, who was intently listening, trembled in his shoes. To prevent this calamity the prudent Richard determined to make a pseudo-spontaneous offer of some sort to the corporal, and hush up the whole affair.

At sight of Hickman the corporal was for laying on,

as our elder dramatists have it; but Mr. Casenower, who was there, arrested his arm, and proposed to him to hear what the man had to say.

"Well," cried Patrick, "let him speak out, then, before them all — they have all seen us affronted through his villany. Where is Rachael?"

So then the corporal came round to where Rachael stood, pale as death; and Robert sat pale, too, but clenching his teeth like one who would die sooner than utter a cry, though many vultures, called passions, were gnawing the poor lad's heart at this moment. And, to make matters worse, both Mr. and Mrs. Hathorn, seeing this assemblage, were drawn by a natural curiosity to join the group.

And here Mr. Hickman's brass enabled him to cut a more brilliant figure than his past conduct justified. He cast a sly, satirical look at them, especially at poor Robert, and, setting his back to the railings, he opened the ball thus:—

"I come to speak to Mrs. Mayfield; she says, 'Speak before all the rest.' With all my heart. I come to say three words to Mr. Patrick; 'Speak before all the rest,' says he. Well, why not? It is a matter of taste. Mr. Patrick, I have done you wrong, and I own it; but you have had your revenge. You have told the story your way, and the very boys are for throwing stones at me here, and you have set Mrs. Mayfield against me, that used to look at me as a cat does at cream."

"As a cat does at water, you mean — you impudent, ugly dog!"

"Keep your temper, my darling; you were for having everything said in public, you know. Well, now let us two make matters smooth, old man. How much will you take to keep your tongue between your teeth after this?"

Patrick's reply came in form of a question addressed to the company in general: —

"Friends, since Corporal Patrick of the Forty-seventh Foot was ill amongst you, and partly out of his senses, has he done any dirty action, that this fellow comes and offers him money in exchange for good name?"

"No, Mr. Patrick," said Robert, breaking silence for the first time. "You are an honest man, and a better man than ever stood in Dick Hickman's shoes."

Hickman bit his lip, and cast a wicked glance at Robert.

"And your daughter is as modest a lass as ever broke bread, for all her misfortunes," cried Mrs. Hathorn.

"And none but a scoundrel would hope to cure the mischief he has done with money," cried the Mayfield.

"Spare me, good people," said Hickman, ironically.

"Ay, spare him," said Patrick, simply. "I have spared him this five years for Rachael's sake; but my patience is run out," roared the old man, and, lifting his staff, he made a sudden rush at the brazen Hickman. Casenower and old Hathorn interposed.

"Let him alone," said Hickman, "you may be sure I sha'n't lift my hand against fourscore years. I'll go sooner," and he began to saunter off.

"What! you are a coward as well, are you?" roared Patrick. "Then I pity you. Begone, ye lump of dirt, with your idleness, your pride, your meanness, your money, and the shame of having offered it to a soldier like me that has seen danger and glory."

"Well done, Mr. Patrick," cried Hathorn, "that is an honor to a poor man to be able to talk like that."

"Yes, Mr. Patrick, that was well said."

"It is well said, and well done."

Every eye was now bent with admiration on Patrick, and from him they turned with an universal movement

of disdain to Hickman. The man writhed for a moment under this human lightning difficult to resist, and then it was he formed a sudden resolution that took all present by surprise. Conscience pricked him a little, Rachael's coldness piqued him, jealousy of Robert stung him, general disdain annoyed him, and he longed to turn the tables on them all. Under this strange medley of feelings and motives, he suddenly wheeled round and faced them all, with an air of defiance that made him look much handsomer than they had seen him yet, and he marched into the middle of them.

"I'll show you all I am not so bad as you make me out — you listen, old man — Rachael, you say that you love me still, and that 'tis for my sake you refuse Bob Hathorn, as I believe it is, and the Devil take me if I won't marry you now, for all that is come and gone." He then walked slowly and triumphantly past Robert Hathorn, looking down on him with superior scorn, and he came close up to Rachael, who was observed to tremble as he came near her. "Well, Rachael, my lass, I am Richard Hickman, and I offer you the ring before these witnesses. Say yes, and you are mistress of Bix Farm — and Mrs. Hickman. Oh, I know the girl I make the offer to," added he, maliciously; "if you could not find out what she is worth, I could. Where are you all now? — name the day, Rachael, here is the man."

Rachael made no answer.

It was a strange situation, so strange that a dead silence followed Hickman's words. Marriage offered to a woman before a man's face who had tried to kill himself for her but yesterday, and offered by a man who had neglected her entirely for five years, and had declined her under more favorable circumstances. Then the motionless silence of the woman so addressed —

they all hung upon her lips, poor Mr. Casenower not excepted, who feared that, now Rachael was to be Mrs. Hickman, Robert might turn to Mrs. Mayfield and crush his new-raised hopes.

As for Robert, he did everything he could to make Rachael say "Yes" to Hickman. He called up a dogged look of indifference, and held it on his face by main force. It is to be doubted, though, whether this imposed on Rachael. She stole a single glance at him under her long lashes, and at last her voice broke softly but firmly on them all, and it sounded like a bell, so hushed were they all, and so highly strung was their attention and expectation.

"I thank you, Richard Hickman, but I decline your offer."

"Are you in earnest, little girl?"

"Rachael," said Patrick, "think — are you sure you know your own mind?"

"Grandfather, to marry a man I must swear in the face of Heaven to love and honor him. How could I respect Richard Hickman? If he was the only man left upon the earth, I could not marry him, and I would not. I would rather die!"

Robert drew a long breath.

"You have got your answer," said Patrick, "so now, if I was you, I'd be off."

"If I don't, I'm a fool. I shall go to my uncle: he lives ninety miles from here, and you'll see I shall get a farm there and a wife and all — if so be you don't come there a-reaping, Mr. Patrick."

"Heaven pardon you, then," said the old man, gravely. "You are but young; remember it is not too late to repair your ill-conduct to us by good conduct to others; so now good-aaternoon."

"Good-aaternoon, Daddy Patrick," said Hickman,

with sudden humility. "Your servant, all the company," added he, taking off his hat. So saying, he went off. He had no sooner turned the corner than he repented him of the manner of his going; so, putting his hands in his pockets, he whistled the first verse of "The Plough-boy," until out of hearing. As these last sounds of Hickman died away, they all looked at one another in silence. Old Hathorn was the first to speak.

"That was uncommon spirity to refuse Hickman," said he, bluntly, "but you have too much pride, both of you."

"No, not I, farmer," said the old man, sorrowfully. "I have been proud, and high-spirited too; but it is time that passed away from me. I am old enough to see from this world into another, and from this hour to my last (and that won't be long, I hope), I am patient; the sky is above the earth; my child has had wrong — cruel, bitter, undeserved wrong; but we will wait for Heaven's justice, since man has none for us: and we will take it when it comes, here or hereafter."

The fiery old man's drooping words brought the water into all their eyes, and Robert, in whose mind so sore a struggle had been raging, sprang to his feet.

"You speak well," he cried, "you are a righteous man, and my ill-pride falls before your words; it is my turn to ask your daughter of you. Rachael, you take me for husband and friend for life. I loved you well enough to die for you, and now I love you well enough to live for you; Rachael, be my wife — if *you* please."

"She won't say 'No' this time," cried Rose Mayfield, archly.

"Thank you, Robert," said Rachael, mournfully. "I am more your friend than to say 'Yes.'"

"Rachael," cried Mrs. Hathorn, "if it is on our account, I never saw a lass I would like so well for daughter-in-law as yourself."

"No, mother," said Robert; "it is on account of father. Father, if you will not be offended, I shall put a question to you that I never thought to put to my father. Have I been a good son or a bad son to you these eight and twenty years?"

"Robert!" cried the old man, in a quivering tone, that showed these simple words had gone through and through his heart. Then he turned to Rachael: "My girl, I admire your pride; but have pity on my poor boy and me."

"And on yourself," put in Mrs. Mayfield.

"May Heaven bless you, Mr. Hathorn!" said Rachael. "If I say 'No' to Robert, I have a reason that need offend no one. Folk would never believe I was not in fault; they would cast his wife's story in his teeth, and sting us both to death; for he is proud, and I am proud too. And what I have gone through — oh! it has made me as bitter as gall — as bitter as gall!"

"Rachael Wright," cried the old corporal sternly, "listen to me!"

"Rachael Wright!" yelled Casenower. "Oh! gracious heavens! — Rachael Wright — it is — it must be. I knew it was an odd combination — I got it into my head it was 'Rebecca Reid' — is this Rachael Wright, sir?"

"Of course it is," said the corporal, peevishly.

"Then I have got something for her from my late partners. I'll find it — it is at the bottom of my seeds," and away scampered Casenower.

He presently returned, and interrupted a rebuke Mr. Patrick was administering to Rachael, by giving her a long envelope. She opened it with some surprise, and ran her eye over it, for she was what they call in the county a capital scholar. Now as she read, her face changed and changed like an April sky, and each change

was a picture and a story. They looked at her in wonder as well as curiosity. At last a lovely red mantled in her pale cheek, and a smile like a rainbow, a smile those present had never seen on her face, came back to her from the past. The paper dropped from her hands as she stretched them out, like some benign goddess or nymph, all love, delicacy, and grace.

"Robert," she cried, and she need have said no more, for the little word "Robert," as she said it, was a volume of love; "Robert, I love, I always loved you. I am happy — happy — happy!" and she threw her arm round Robert's neck, and cried and sobbed, and, crying and sobbing, told him again and again how happy she was.

"Hallo!" cried Hathorn, cheerfully, "wind has shifted in your favor, appearently, Bob."

Mrs. Mayfield picked up the paper. "This has done it," cried she, and she read it out *pro bono*. The paper contained the copy of a will made by Rachael's aunt, a year before she died. The sour old lady, being wrath with Rachael on account of her misconduct in getting victimized, but not quite so wrath as with her graceless nephew, had taken a medium course. She had not destroyed this will, as she did the other, by which graceless nephew was to benefit, but she hid it in the wall, safe as ever magpie hid thimble, and dying somewhat suddenly, she died intestate to all appearance. This old lady was immeasurably fond of the old ramshackly house she lived in. So, after awhile, to show his contempt of her, graceless nephew had the house pulled down; the workmen picked out of the wall the will in question. An old servant of the lady, whom graceless nephew had turned off, lived hard by, and was sorrowfully watching the demolition of the house, when the will was picked out. Old servant read the

will, and found herself down for one hundred pounds. Old servant took the will to a firm of solicitors, no other than Casenower's late partners. They sent down to Rachael's village; she and Patrick were gone; a neighbor said they were reaping somewhere in Oxfordshire. The firm sent a copy of the will to Casenower as a forlorn hope, and employed a person to look out for Rachael's return to her own place, as the best chance of doing business with her. By the will, two thousand pounds and Bix Farm were bequeathed to Rachael.

"Bix Farm! Three hundred acres!" cried Hathorn.

"Bix Farm — the farm Hickman is on," cried Rose Mayfield. "Kick him out; he has no lease. If you don't turn him out neck and crop before noon to-morrow, I'm a dead woman."

"The farm is Robert's," said Rachael; "and so is all I have to give him, if he will accept it." And though she looked at Mrs. Mayfield, she still clung to Robert.

Robert kissed her, and looked so proudly at them all! "Have I chosen ill?" said Robert's eyes.

CHAPTER X.

When everybody sees how a story will end, the story is ended.

Robert and Rachael live on their own farm, Bix; Corporal Patrick sits by their fireside.

People laugh at Mr. Casenower's eccentricities; but it is found unsafe to laugh at them in presence of Mrs. Casenower, late Mayfield.

I think I cannot conclude better than by quoting a few words that passed between Mrs. Hathorn and Cor-

poral Patrick, as they all sat round one table that happy evening.

"Rose," said this homely good creature, "I do notice that trouble comes to all of us at one time or other; and I think they are the happiest that have their trouble (like these two children) in the morning of their days."

"Ay, dame," said the corporal, taking up the word, "and after that a bright afternoon, and a quiet evening — as mine will be now, please God!"

Friendly reader (for I have friendly as well as unfriendly readers), I do not wish you a day without a cloud, for you are human, and I, though a writer, am not a humbug. But, in ending this tale, I wish you a bright afternoon, and a tranquil evening, and above all a clear sky when the sun goes down.

II.

THE BLOOMER.

CHAPTER I.

PROPRIA quæ maribus tribuuntur mascula dicas.
Free Trans. — The things that are proper to males you may call masculine.

JOHN COURTENAY was the son of Richard Courtenay. Richard was the younger son of a good Devonshire family: his elder brother inherited four thousand a year — he, fifteen hundred pounds down from the same relative, his father — *vive l'Angleterre!*

His fifteen hundred pounds wouldn't do in a genteel country like England; so he went to America and commerce. He died richer than the owner of Courtenay Court.

John, his son, was richer still by the same honorable means.

He was also a stanch republican. The unparalleled rise and grandeur of the United States might well recommend their institutions to any candid mind; and John Courtenay spent his leisure moments in taking the gloss off John Bull's hide. He was not so spiteful against him as some of those gentry who owe their cleverness to themselves, but their existence to Bull and forget it: his line was rather cool contempt. The old country was worn out and decayed; it was progressing like a crab instead of going ahead, etc.

For all this, one fine day something seemed to crack inside John Courtenay's bosom when he saw an announcement from the modest pen of Robins, that Courtenay Court was in the market.

He did not think such an advertisement would have interested him any more than consols ninety-six and a half — but it did.

This gentleman was at the moment working a loan at five per cent with Kentucky; and he had promised himself to be in it to the tune of fifty thousand pounds: but all this day he took more snuff than was good for him, and the next day after breakfast and a reverie he suddenly burst out, "Pshaw! the worst investment in the worst country: a sinking interest in a sinking kingdom."

"Papa!" said a musical voice, "your paying me no attention will, I fear, end in your being worried."

This worrying meant a certain violent system of kissing with which the speaker used to fall upon John Courtenay when he was very good or very bad; she used it indifferently as a reward or punishment.

This time, to her surprise, the old gentleman answered her smiling threat by opening his arms in a moment and saying, "My child!"

In another moment Caroline Courtenay was in his arms: he pressed his lips to her brow, and said, "I will do it! I will do it!"

"What will you do, papa?"

"That is my business, I reckon," said he, recovering the statesman and man of business with rather a brusque reaction — and off he bustled to Wall Street, "where merchants most do congregate."

Caroline stood irresolute, and had a mind to whimper — she thought her affection had been for once half repulsed.

Caroline! doubt anything, everything, but a parent's love for his only child.

CHAPTER II.

In three weeks after this the hammer came to Courtenay Court, and that hammer was wielded (I use the term he would have selected) by the St. George of the auction room.

Need I say the wood and water of the estate had previously been painted in language as flowing as the one and as exuberant as the foliage of the other?

In the large hall were two fireplaces where piles of beech-log blazed and crackled.

Mr. Robins made his bow, and up went Courtenay Court, manor and lordship, in a single lot.

There were present, besides farmers, some forty country gentlemen, many of whom looked business: they had not examined their own horizon as John Courtenay, merchant, had. Land was in vogue.

I don't wonder at it.

Certainly a landed estate is "an animal with its mouth always open." But compare the physical perception and enjoyment of landed wealth with that of consols and securities.

Can I get me rosy cheeks, health, and good-humor, riding up and down my Peruvian bonds; can I go out shooting upon my parchment, or in summer sit under the shadow of my mortgage deed, and bob for commas and troll for semicolons in my river of ink that meanders through my meadow of sheepskin?

Wherefore I really think land will always tempt even the knowing ones, until some vital change shall take

place in society: for instance, till the globe makes its exit in smoke and the blue curtain comes down on the creation.

Three or four gentlemen held the bidding up till about thirty thousand pounds; it then became flat.

And now one Adam Eaves, a farmer, pushed sheepishly forward, made an advance on the bidding, and looked ashamed.

Why lookest thou ashamed, O yeoman, bulwark of our isle?

This is why. Adams Eaves farmed two farms; and he had for three years been praying his landlords for a decrease of rent, upon grounds that nowise tallied with his little offer of thirty thousand one hundred pounds down on the nail for Courtenay Manor; and therefore looked he ashamed, the simple-minded yeoman, bulwark of our isle.

Joshua Tanner, linen-draper in the market-town, he whose cry for ten years had been the decay of retail trade, was so surprised at this that thrown off his guard he bid an hundred more — but the mask once thrown off, he blushed not, but sprinkled insulting arrogance on all around.

Both these worthies, who, unlike us writers, had for years announced themselves beneath their true value, gave way to heavier metal, and the estate began to approach its real worth. It was at thirty-eight thousand pounds.

There was a pause. St. George looked jocose, and felt uneasy: were they running cunning like their own hounds, these South country gentlemen?

He now looked carefully all round the room: a long attenuated figure with a broad-brimmed hat on, standing by a distant window, met his eye, and, as if to oblige him, now for the first time made a cool *nonchalant* bid

by nodding his head — round went all the company on their heels with their backs to the auctioneer, as, when in the last row of the pit two personages of this our day go to fisticuffs, I have seen the audience turn its back on the quarrel of Brutus and Cassius, or Melantius and Amyntor.

Forty-two, three, four thousand were reached — two country gentlemen bidders turned red and white — the pin bid on, rhythmically, at measured intervals, like a chaff-cutting machine, unconscious of opposition, indifferent to result.

The estate was now at thirty years' purchase; a hum that went round the room announced this fact without a word spoken — all the hounds had tailed off but one. He went on. The two bidders were strangely contrasted: it seemed odd they could both want the same thing. In shape one was like a pin: the other a pincushion.

Our friend at the window was all one color, like washleather, or an actor by daylight; the other, with his head of white hair as thick as a boy's, and his red-brown cheeks, and his bright eye, reflected comfort as brightly as Hampton Court with its red brick and white facings, and cheered the eye like old Sun and old Frost battling for a December day.

At last the thin and sallow personage uttered these words: "Forty-seven thousand pounds!" in a nasal twang that seemed absurdly unjust to the grand ideas such words excite in elegant minds conscious how many refined pleasures can be had for forty-seven thousand pounds.

His antagonist's head sunk for a moment.

He sighed, and instead of bidding higher or holding his tongue, the two business alternatives open to him, he said, "Then it will never be mine!"

He said this so simply, yet with so much pain, that some of those good souls, who unless they have two days to think over it with their wives or sisters, are sure to take the pathetic for the ludicrous, horse-laughed at him.

He turned away. Mr. Robins did not waste a second in idle flourishes; when a thing is settled, end it, thought he: he knocked the lot down now as he would a china tea-pot in a sale of two hundred lots — and the old oaks of Courtenay bowed their heads to a Yankee merchant.

The buyer stepped up to the auctioneer.

Mr. Ralph Seymour, the last bidder, made for the door — at the door he buttoned with difficulty his coat over his breast, for his heart was swelling and his eye glistened. It was a bitter disappointment — we who live in towns can hardly think how bitter. Such sales do not come every day in the country: his estate marched for a mile and a half with the Courtenays. He had counted on no competition but that of his neighbors, he had bought it from them: but a man who happened to want an estate had come from London, or, as it was now whispered, from New York.

Any other estate would have suited *him* as well, but he *would* have this.

Poor old gentleman, he had told Mrs. Seymour she should walk this evening under the great birch-trees of the Courtenays — and they be hers!

They had been married forty years, and he had never broken his word to her before.

The auctioneer read the buyer's card.

"Sold to Mr. Jonathan Sims," — said he.

"Ugh!" went one or two provincials, and then dead silence.

"Acting," continued the auctioneer, "for Mr. John Courtenay of New York."

There was a pause — a hurried buzz — and then, to Mr. Sims's surprise, a thundering "Hurrah" burst out that made the rafters ring and the windows rattle.

"It's Master Richard's son," shouted Adam Eaves. "My father's ridden many's the time with Master Richard, he rode the mule, and father the jenny-ass after Squire Courtenay's hounds, HURRAIH!"

Omnes. Hurraih!

The thorough-bred old John Bull at the door, Mr. Ralph Seymour, seemed glad of an excuse to get rid of some bile foreign to his nature. In three strides he was alongside Jonathan, and had he been French it was plain he would have said something neat, but as he was only English he grasped Mr. Sims's hand like a vise — and — asked him to dinner.

That is the English idea, — you must ask a gentleman to dinner; and you must give a poor man a day's work — that wins him.

John Courtenay came home: I omit the objections he took, *chemin faisant*, to things in the old country. They would fill a volume with just remonstrance.

He came to his own lodge-gate; the old man who opened it sung out, —

"Oh! Master John, how like you be to Master Richard sure*ly*."

Courtenay was astonished: he found this old boy had been thinking of him all that way off for sixty years, ever since his birth transpired.

The old housekeeper welcomed him with tears in her eyes.

He dined in a room enriched with massive old carvings, he walked after dinner under his avenue of birches with silver stems of gigantic thickness and patriarchal age. The housekeeper put him in a bed his father had slept in when a boy.

Soon the country gentlemen made acquaintance with him. The strong idea of distributive justice he had brought from commerce, and his business habits, caused him to be consulted and valued.

It is a fact that after some months in Devonshire he developed a trait or two of Toryism, but they could not make him believe that nations are the property of kings, and countries their home farms. They did all they could think of to corrupt him.

They made him perforce a justice of the peace. He remonstrated and pooh-poohed, but was no sooner one than he infused fresh blood into the withered veins of justice in his district. He became a referee in all nice matters of rural equity. In short, his neighbors had all overcome any little prejudice, and had learned his value when — they lost him. His time was come to close an honorable life by a peaceful death.

Short as had been his career among them, the whole county followed him to his resting-place among the Courtenays in Conyton church vault.

He left all his land and all his money by will to his daughter. To his will he attached a paper containing some requests.

One was that she would provide for the aged housekeeper and lodgekeeper, who knew his father, and welcomed him home: he called it home. But there was nothing about where he wished her to live. He did not decide the great little question: is America or England the right place for us globules to swell and burst in?

In other words, when he wrote this letter John Courtenay was dying, and thought less about the kingdom whence came his root, or the State where his flowers had bloomed, than of a country he had learned to look towards by being neither Yankee nor Briton so much as an honest, God-fearing man; so his thoughts were now upon a land

older than little England, broader than the great United States, — a land where Americans and English are brothers.

And I warn them and all men to be brothers here, lest they never see that land.

Caroline Courtenay remained at New York. There was little to tempt her to leave her birthplace, and visit the country which seemed to her to have robbed her of her father. It happened, however, about three years after Mr. Courtenay's death, that a fresh circumstance changed her feeling in that respect.

Young Reginald Seymour, who had come to see the States, had brought letters of introduction to her, and had prolonged his stay from a fortnight to eight months. And he was eloquent in praise of Courtenay Court, and of his father's place, which adjoined it; and what Reginald praised, Caroline desired to see.

Miss Courtenay combined two qualities which are generally seen in opposition — beauty and wit. On her wit, however, she had latterly cast some doubt by a trick she had fallen into.

She had been detected thinking for herself. Ay, more than once.

This came of being left an orphan, poor thing. She had no one to warn her, day by day, against this habit, which is said always to lead her sex into trouble when they venture upon it. Luckily, they don't do it very often.

Wealth, wit, and beauty meeting with young blood were enough to spoil a character. All they had done in this case was to give her a more decided one than most young ladies of her age have, or could carry without spilling.

It so happened, one day, that a question much agitated in parts of the United States occupied a semicircle of

ladies, of whom Miss Courtenay was one. This was a new costume introduced by a highly respectable lady, the editor of a paper called the *Lily*, and wife of a lawyer of some eminence at Seneca Falls.

The company generally were very severe on this costume, and proceeded upwards from the pantalets to the morals of the inventor, which, though approved at Seneca by simple observation, were depreciated at New York by intelligent inference.

When the conversation began, Miss Courtenay looked down on the bare idea of the bloomer costume.

But its vituperators shook her opinion by a very simple process, — they gave their reasons.

"It is awkward and absurd," said one, as, by way of contrast, she glided majestically to the piano to sing. As she spoke her foot went through her dress, to the surprise of — nobody.

"It is highly indelicate to expose any portion of the — in short, the — the — the — ankle," continued the lady at the piano.

"It is, Miss Jemima," purred a smooth, deferential gentleman, looking over her. His eye dwelt complacently on two snowy hemispheres.

A little extravagance injures a good cause.

At last Miss Courtenay, fired by opposition and unreasonable reasons, began to favor the general theory of bloomer.

Next she converted several friends, still to the theory only. This got wind, and a general attack was made on her by her well-wishers. Their arguments and sneers completed the business, and she was pretty far gone in bloomerism when the following scene took place in her own kitchen.

Elisa, the cook, was making pastry on the long oak table. Her face was redder than her work accounted for.

"Well, Elisa," said Mrs. Trimmer, the housekeeper, "your tongue won't stop of itself, of course not, so I'll stop it."

"Do, ma'am," suggested Elisa with meek incredulity.

"You sha'n't wear them here," said Mrs. Trimmer.

"La, ma'am," said the housemaid Angelina, "she had better wear them in the house than in the street with two hundred boys at her tail."

"That is not my meaning," answered Mrs. Trimmer. "I hired you for a female cook, and the moment you put on —— things that don't belong to a woman, our bargain's broke and you go."

"Well, it *is* an indelicate dress," observed Angelina; then turning to John Giles, Elisa's sweetheart, who was eating pork at the dresser, "Don't you think so, Mr. Giles?" inquired she affectedly.

"I-does," said Giles, with his mouth full. Giles was a Briton in the suite of young Seymour.

"Vulgar?" suggested Angelina.

"And no mistake," said Giles: "it's as vulgar as be blowed," added he, clenching the nail with his polished hammer.

"And who asked your opinion?" inquired Elisa, sharply.

"Angelina," replied Giles. Giles was matter-of-fact.

Elisa. I mean to wear it for as vulgar as 'tis.

Giles. Then you had better look for another man (applause).

Elisa. Oh, they are always to be had without *looking out;* so long as there's pickled pork in the kitchen they'll *look in.*

Angelina. Well, I think a woman should dress to gratify the men (with an œillade at Giles), not to imitate them.

Elisa. The men! so long as we sweep the streets for

them with our skirts, they are all right. You talk of delicacy : is dirt delicacy ?

On this she whipped off a chair by the fire a gown that had met with a misfortune ; it had been out walking on a wet day. Elisa put it viciously under Angelina's nose, who recoiled. An accurate description of it would soil these pages.

"Is that pretty," continued cook, "to carry a hundredweight of muck wherever you go ? "

"Dirt can't be helped," retorted Trimmer, "indecency can."

"Indecent ! " cried Elisa, with a face like scarlet. "Who's a-going to be indecent in this kitchen ? "

"The gals," suggested Angelina, "who wear — who wear " —

"Small-clothes," put in Giles.

A grateful glance repaid him for extricating the pair from a conventional difficulty.

"What, it's indecent because it shows your instep, I suppose ? You go into the drawing-room this evening, and the young ladies shall show you more than ever a bloomer will. Women's delicacy ! " said Elisa, putting her hand under the paste and bringing it down on the reverse with a whack. "Gammon ! Fashion is what we care for, not delicacy. If it was the fashion to tie our right foot to our left ear, wouldn't you do it ? "

"No ! " said Angelina with but little hesitation.

"Then I would ! " cried Elisa, sacrificing herself to her argument. "What did they wear last year," continued this orator, "eh ? answer me that whisking to and fro as they walked and drawing everybody's attention."

In speaking, Elisa was worse than I am in writing, she never punctuated at all.

"So you mean to wear them ? " inquired Mrs. Trimmer, coming back from the argument to the point.

Elisa. Yes, I do.

Observe. At the beginning of the argument she had no such intention.

Mrs. Trimmer. Then I give you a month's warning, here and now, Elisa Staunton.

Elisa. And I won't take it from you, Mrs. Trimmer.

Mrs. Trimmer. Who will you take it from, then ?

Elisa. The mistress or nobody.

Angelina. La, Lisa ! you know she never speaks to a servant.

Elisa. She speaks to Mrs. Trimmer, don't she ?

Mrs. Trimmer. Am I a servant, hussy ? Am I a servant ?

Elisa. Yes, you are ; we are all servants here : some is paid for doing the work, and other some for looking on and interrupting it here and there.

Mrs. Trimmer (gasping). Leave the kitchen, young woman.

Elisa. The kitchen's mine, and the housekeeper's room is yours, old woman.

" Go to the mistress, and tell her I want to come and speak to her," gasped the insulted housekeeper, deprived of motion by her fury.

Angelina took but one step before Elisa caught her, held the roller high above her head, and, saying " If you offer to go there I'll roll ye up into my paste," pushed her down into a chair, where she roared and blubbered.

" O you rude, brutal-behaved woman ! " cried Trimmer. " I shall faint."

Helps have an insolence all their own ; they say the most cutting things with a tone of extra sweetness and courtesy, that has the effect of fire quenched with sweet oil, or brandy softened with oil of vitriol.

With such sweet and measured tones Elisa said, half under her breath, " Giles, you *go* — into the house-

keeper's room — and look behind the door — and you'll find — the biggest brandy-bottle you ever did see — Mrs. Trimmer wants it!"

This dry little speech was hartshorn. Some spring seemed to have been pressed, so erect bounced Mrs. Trimmer.

She bustled up to Elisa, and, with a spite that threatened annihilation, gave her an infinitesimal pat on the back of her head, and retired precipitately with a face in which misgiving already took the place of fury.

Elisa put down the roller quite leisurely, and cleaned her fingers slowly of dough.

"It is lucky for you," said she firmly, "that you are the same age as my mother, or down you'd go on those bricks. Oh! oh! oh! oh! oh!" and down went she on a chair opposite Angelina, and her apron over her head; for these women who are going to tear the house down and stand like mercury on the *débris*, in a bloomer, with a finger pointing to truth and a toe to futurity, are just two shades more faint-hearted at bottom than the others.

So Elisa and Angelina kept up the bawl with great want of spirit, bursting out in turns after the manner of strophe and antistrophe.

Et ululare pares et *des*pondere paratæ.

Meantime the man of one idea at a time, Giles, was obeying orders and going after the bottle specified by Elisa, and had his hand on the door of housekeeper's room.

"Giles!" screamed the proprietor. He stood petrified. "There is no such thing in my room," said she, with sudden calmness.

Giles returned to the dresser.

The present scene had lately received an addition that made it perfect, a satirical spectator.

The pantry window which looked into the kitchen was opened by a footman whose head had been previously seen bobbing wildly up and down as he cleaned his plate.

This footman had admired Elisa, but, outweighed by the solid virtues and limbs of Giles, was furtively looking out for a chance of disturbing the balance.

Elisa and Angelina were now sobbing placidly.

Mr. Giles stretched his legs slowly out before him and said very slowly, and with really an appearance of reflection, "Now all this — here — bobbery — comes from a woman — making up — *her* mind — to wear — the — B-ugh a ha ho ho! ugh!"

Elisa had bounced up in a rage, and dabbed the paste right over his mouth, nose, eyes, face, and temples. (He should have spoken quicker.)

It was nearly his death: however, with horrible noises and distortions he got clear of it.

The footman roared with laughter — he thought he never had seen so truly funny a thing done in his life — none of your vulgar jokes — "legitimate humor," thought John (Giles being my rival). However, turning suddenly grave he said, —

"Well, you are drawing it mild, you are — here's the mistress coming to see whose cat's dead." So saying he slammed the window, and his head went bobbing again over his spoons.

At this announcement histrionics commenced. "Mrs. Trimmer, madam," began Elisa demurely, with a total change of manner, "I'm sure, ma'am, you wouldn't take away a poor girl's place that's three thousand miles away from home all for a word, ma'am!"

"You may pack up your box, Elisa, for you won't sleep in this house," was the grim answer.

"O Mrs. Trimmer," remonstrated Elisa tearfully; "if

you have no heart for poor servants, where do you expect to go to?"

"I shall go nowhere," replied the dignitary; "I shall stay here, it's you that shall march." Then hearing a light step approach, she astonished them all by suddenly rising into a wild sonorous recitative, —

"I have my mistress's confidence, and will deserve it."

Miss Courtenay stood on the threshold.

Mrs. Trimmer's game was not to see her. She intoned a little louder.

"No woman shall stay a day in this house" —

"Well, I never!" gasped Angelina, looking towards the door.

"Hold your tongue — no woman shall stay a day in this house who thinks to put on that *im*moral, *on*delicate, *on*decent — ah! ah! ah!" Trimmer screamed, put her nose out straight in the air — put on her spectacles, and screamed again.

Miss Courtenay stood at the door in a suit of *propria quæ maribus!*

CHAPTER III.

The world up to that moment had never seen so smart a fella as caused Trimmer's recitative to die in a quaver; h/sh e stood in the threshold erect yet lithe, the serpentine lines of youthful female beauty veiled yet not disguised in vest and pantaloons of marvellous cut — neat little collars, dapper shoes and gaiters, delicious purple broadcloth.

"Giles!" groaned Mrs. Trimmer, "you may go for what Elisa said — anybody may do anything now; I

nursed her on these knees," whined the poor woman with the piteous tone that always accompanies this favorite statement.

"Trimmer," said the Courtenay, coldly, "theatrical exhibitions amuse but do not deceive — be yourself."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Trimmer coolly, dropping her histrionics directly and taking up her tact.

"Hearing cries of distress from my household, I came to see if I could be of any service to you — what is the matter?"

"If you please, ma'am," put in Elisa hastily, "it is all along of Mrs. Trimmer being so hard upon the bloomers, ma'am."

A short explanation followed.

Elisa was asked why she had defended this costume. Elisa, having found such a backer, was fluent in defence of the new costume.

The rest looked unutterable things, but could say nothing.

In the middle of one of her long sentences her mistress cut her short, congratulated her demurely on her sense, informed her that she wished one of the servants to assist her in a little scheme for recommending the dress; that she should have hesitated to propose it, but, having found one already so disposed, would use her services.

"On my bed you will find a costume; put it on immediately, and come to me for further instructions." So saying, she vanished with a sly smile.

Elisa watched her departing form with a rueful face. She discovered when too late that she had never for a moment intended to wear the thing, and had only defended it out of contrariness. She moved towards the door like a lamb to sacrifice.

"Ahem!" said Mrs. Trimmer; "you can go into the street dressed like hobbadehoy if you like, Miss Staunton,

but if I might ask a favor, it is that you won't tell the people what house you come out of; because I come of decent people in the neighborhood, that might feel hurt and leave the town owing to such a thing being seen come out of the house where I am. That's all, ma'am. And I am a regular attendant on public and family worship."

This was said very politely.

"Well, ma'am," answered Elisa, beginning as politely, but heating so much per sentence, "I don't know as bloomers are so like what you mention ma'am as your own gown would be ma'am if it was a bit cleaner ma'am. But whenever I meet a new-married couple coming from church I'll step up to the bride and I'll say Mrs. Trimmer requests you would be so good as not put on your night-gown before supper next time, she's turned so devilish modest *all of a sudden.*"

So saying, Elisa flounced out in a rage, and, her blood being put up, burned now to go through with it.

CHAPTER IV.

Reginald Seymour was a handsome, gentlemanly fellow, heir-apparent of the unsuccessful bidder for Courtenay Court.

He had been for six months the declared lover of the heiress, and his sister Harriet, warmly invited by Miss Courtenay, had at length taken advantage of an escort offered by an English family, and was a guest of the *fiancée.*

If Reginald had a fault it was too strong a consciousness of the antiquity and importance of the Seymours, and as that was combined with a determination to hand

down their name as pure as he had received it, it was a very excusable weakness.

He was, however, perhaps rather more formal and stately than suited his youth.

It was in the dusk of the evening that Harriet Seymour, full dressed for the ball and entertainment, came into a sort of antechamber with a bouquet of choice flowers in her hand, and there encountered Caroline, for whom, in fact, she was looking. At sight of her friend Harriet did not at first comprehend; all she realized was that her friend's shoulders were not visible.

"What, not dressed yet, Caroline?" said she. "It is very late."

"I am dressed, dear."

"Why, of course I see you have some clothes on for fun — he! he! — but it is to be a ball, dear."

"My feet will be as unembarrassed as yours, dear," replied Caroline quietly.

Harriet gave her the bouquet, and said, with much meaning, "Reginald sends you these. Of course you did not know he was returned."

"Of course I did," was the reply. "He is to be here."

Harriet. Oh! Reginald loves you, Caroline.

Caroline. So he pretends.

Harriet. He loves you with all the force of an honest heart, and I love you for his sake and your own. Give me the privilege of a sister: let me advise you.

Caroline. With all my heart.

Harriet. Yes; but advice is apt to be ill received.

Caroline. That is because it is given hastily and harshly; but true friends like you and me — oh, fie!

Harriet. Promise, then, not to be angry with me.

Caroline. Certainly; only you must promise not to be angry if I am too silly or self-willed to take it.

Harriet. I should not be angry, love, though I might be grieved on your own account.

Caroline. Well, then, dear.

Harriet. Well, then, dear. Do not receive society in this costume. I will never tell Reginald, and do not you let him know you ever wore it.

Caroline. But how can I help it, when he is going to see me in it?

Harriet. It is for your delicacy, your feminine qualities, he has loved you.

Caroline. Has he? (looking down.) Well, those qualities reside in our souls, not our — habiliments.

Harriet. Not in such habiliments as those. He will be shocked.

Caroline. No; only surprised a little. He, he!

Harriet. He will be grieved, Caroline.

Caroline. I shall console him.

Harriet (with color heightening). He will be indignant.

Caroline (with color rising). I shall laugh at him.

Harriet. He will be disgusted.

Caroline. Ah, then I shall dismiss him.

Harriet. I see I speak to no purpose, Miss Courtenay.

Caroline. To very little, Miss Seymour.

Harriet. I shall say no more, madam.

Caroline. You have said enough, madam.

Harriet. Since you despise my advice, please yourself.

Caroline. I shall take your advice at present.

Harriet. But you will *never* be my brother's wife!

Caroline. Then I shall *always* be mistress in my own house.

Harriet, who was at the door, returned as if to speak, but she was too angry, gave it up, and retired half choking.

A sacred joy filled Caroline's bosom — she had had the last word!

As she was about to pass out of the room who should

enter hastily but Reginald Seymour — her back was towards him.

He called to her, "Can you tell me where I shall find Miss Courtenay, sir?"

Caroline bit her lips; but she turned sharply round and said, "She is in this room, madam."

"Oh!" said Reginald — he added, "O Caroline!" and looked pained.

Caroline blushed; and if heavenly looks and little female artifice could have softened censure they were not wanting.

"What beautiful flowers you have sent me!" said she; "see, I threw away my formal bouquet for your *nosegay.*"

"You do me honor," said the young gentleman uneasily.

"Honor! no! but justice; a single violet from you deserves to be preferred to roses and camellias."

"Dear Caroline! I withdraw; you are not dressed yet, and people will soon arrive."

Caroline saw there was no real way of escape, so with great external calmness she said sweetly, —

"I am dressed, dear Reginald."

"I beg your pardon," said he as not understanding her.

"I forgive you," said the sly thing, taking him up, "there are so many who do not see the beauty of — all this; I have promised to wear it to-night," continued she (not allowing him to get in a word), "and to compare it calmly and candidly with other costumes; you will be so amused, and we shall arrive at a real judgment instead of violent prejudices, which you are above; at least I give you credit; I should not admire you so much as I do if I doubted that."

"Caroline," said the young gentleman, gravely.

"Yes, Reginald."

"Dear Caroline, do you believe I love you?"

"Better than I deserve, I dare say," said Caroline.

"No! as you deserve — I will not own my love inferior even to your merit — do you believe that when we are one my life will be devoted to your happiness?"

"I am sometimes — goose enough — to hope so," murmured Caroline, averting her head.

"Shall you then think ill of me if before marriage I ask a favor, perhaps a sacrifice, of you? I feel I shall not be ungrateful."

"There," thought Caroline. "I am not to wear it — that is plain."

Reginald continued: "If you wear this dress you will give me pain beyond any pleasure you can derive."

"Reginald," said the poor girl, "I wished to wear it — now and then; indeed I *had* set my heart on making a *few* — a very few converts to it: see how pretty it is (no answer); but for your sake, when I take it off to-night, I will give it away, and it shall never, never offend you more."

Reginald kissed her hand.

There was a pause.

"Caroline," said he, stammering, "you do not quite understand me; it is to-day I beg you on no account to wear it."

"Oh! to-day," said she hastily, "I have promised to wear it."

"I entreat you," said he, "consider, if you once show yourself to people from every part of New York in this costume, what more remains to be done?"

"Reginald, be reasonable," said Caroline more coldly: "I stand engaged to some sixty persons to wear this dress to-night — I have made you a concession, and with pleasure, because I make it to you. It is your turn now

— you must think of me as well as of yourself, dear Reginald. I am afraid you must shut your eyes on me for a few hours — that will spoil all my pleasure — or you must fancy, as many a lover has been able to do, that I consecrate a dress, not that a dress has power to lower me."

"O Caroline! do you value my respect?"

"Yes! and therefore I shall keep my word, and so you will feel sure I shall keep my word to you too if ever I promise something about (blushes and smiles) love — honor — and obey."

A battle took place in the young man's mind.

He took several strides backwards and forwards.

At last he burst out, "There are feelings too strong to be conquered by our wishes.

"I cannot bear that my wife should do what three-fourths of her sex think indelicate. We never differed in opinion before, we never shall again — if we do, be assured I will bow to you — I would yield here if I could, but I cannot — I think you can — if you can, have pity on me, and add one more claim to my life-long gratitude."

The balance trembled — the tears were in Caroline's eyes — her bosom fluttered — when the demon of Discord inspired her proud nature with this idea: —

"He loves his prejudices better than you," said Discord, "and this is Tyranny — coaxing Tyranny if you will."

On this hint spake Caroline.

"I find I have rivals."

"Rivals!"

"In your prejudices, Reginald. Neither person nor thing shall ever be my rival. Show me at once which you love with the deeper affection, Mr. Seymour's prejudices or Caroline Courtenay. I shall wear this dress to

night — only for a few hours: consider! you will be here and keep me in countenance, or you don't love me."

"No! Caroline," said Reginald sadly and firmly, "I have spoken: our future life now rests in your hands. I shall not come — I shall arrange so that if you degrade yourself (I cling to the hope you will not) I shall hear of it and leave the country that minute! Were I to *see* it, by Heaven! I should leave the world." He said this in a great heat, but recovering himself said, "Forgive me!" kissed her hand, and went despondently away.

Caroline on his departure wished he had gone away in a pet instead of sorrowful — wished he had been her husband to cut the matter short by carrying her in his arms and securing her in his dressing-room till the ball was over: wished she had never seen the bloomer costume — wished she had the courage to hide and cry in an attic till all was over.

On her meditations entered a plump figure with all manner of expressions chasing one another over her countenance — this was Elisa, who courtesied to attract attention, and failing, presumed that her deportment had not corresponded with her costume, so bowed instead, and ducked, and as a last resource gave a pull at the top of her head.

Caroline. Well!

Elisa. If you please ma'am — but if you please ma'am am I to say ma'am or sir now ma'am?

Caroline. Madam will do for the present.

Elisa. If you please ma'am Kitty the housemaid, that was to wear the short-waisted gown before the company, says she won't put it on for a double dollar.

Caroline. Promise her four dollars then.

Elisa. Yes M.

Caroline. The girl's mother would have been as loath to wear a long waist.

Elisa. Yes M.

Caroline. And to-morrow morning tell Trimmer to discharge her.

Elisa. Yes, M! Oho! (thought Elisa), then now is the time to trim that old fagot Trimmer.

"If you please ma'am I have the greatest respect for Mrs. Trimmer, because she has been here longer than I have, and is a good servant ma'am there's no denying it; but if you please M there's no putting Mrs. Trimmer out of her turnpike road, as the saying is. She says if I don't make the jellies and blamonge she'll make you turn me off ma'am; now how can I when I'm got to learn off all those words you gave me if you please ma'am am I take your orders or Mrs. Trimmer's M?"

Caroline. Now I must ask you a question — who are you?

Elisa. La ma'am! I am Elisa mum! cook mum! I make guava jelly that you like so ma'am!

Caroline. Very well! then Elisa cook, for six hours you are my lieutenant here, and queen in the kitchen: give your orders, and discharge Trimmer and every man or woman in the house that disobeys you, and I'll confirm all you do.

Elisa. Yes M (with flashing eyes).

Caroline. And if you abuse your authority you shall be the first victim.

Elisa. Yes M (crestfallen).

"There," said Elisa to herself as she absconded with a modest reverence, "I've been and given you a dig in your old ribs with my rolling-pin, Mrs. Trimmer."

"Until to-day," thought her mistress, "a look from me was law, and now every creature high and low thwarts and opposes me, ever since I put these vile things on."

Now some would have carried the reasoning out thus: *Ergo*, take these vile things off!

But this sweet creature never dreamed of that path of inference.

"Of this there can be but one consequence," said she, "I shall do it ten times the more."

She then burst out crying, which was an unfair advantage the bloomer took over poor Reginald: for after a shower of tears the ladies acquire additional force.

Rat a tat, tat a tat, tat! tat! tat! tat!

The guests arrived. We shall only particularize one. Mr. Fitzpatrick, an Irish gentleman, who had retained the delightful qualities of his nation and rubbed off its ignorance, and down its prejudices.

Handsome, gay, and though not varnished, polished, he was as charming a companion as either a man or woman could desire.

He was as fond of men as Englishmen are of women, and as fond of the ladies as an Englishman is of adulterated wine.

Fitzpatrick's flattery was agreeable to the ladies; it was so very sincere — he really saw *en beau* both them and all their ways.

At sight of Miss Courtenay in a bloomer he was ravished.

"O Miss Caroline! but that's a beautiful costume ye've invented: the few of us that's left standing will fall to-night: ye've no conscience at all."

"I did not invent the hideous thing; it is bloomer."

"Bloomer? ye're joking. What! is it this they've been running down? Oh! the haythen barbarians! ye were a rainbow at the last ball; but now ye're a sunbeam — ye'll not be for dancing the first dance with an uncouth Celt."

"You will not be for waiting till the seventh, Mr Fitzpatrick!"

"Is it only six ye're engaged? Oh, but I'm in luck to-night."

Mr. Fitzpatrick had been for some time puzzled which he loved most, Harriet Seymour or Caroline Courtenay: but last week he had decided in favor of the latter; without prejudice to the former.

The dancing was kept up with some spirit for two hours; and then Caroline's associates were observed to steal out and to make for various apartments in her very large house on the doors of which their respective names were written in chalk.

Results, not processes, are for the public eye.

Suffice it to say at present in excuse of Caroline's obstinacy that she had been at no small trouble and expense to carry out her little idea. She had also read, drawn, composed, and written: others that saw the work had given her credit for some talent, great talent of course they said; and she was mortified to think her lover would not give her this opportunity of showing him her wit, on which she secretly valued herself more than on her beauty.

A polka concluded. A tide of servants poured in. A semicircle of seats sprung up. A pulpit rose like an exhalation, and almost before her guests could seat themselves, Caroline was a lecturer wearing over her bloomer a B. C. L. gown from Oxford, and the four-cornered cap of that university on her head.

L'effrontée! of whom think you she had borrowed this two days before? — of Reginald!

The optimist Fitzpatrick was enchanted. "She was more beautiful in this than even in a bloomer!" And indeed it became her: the gravity of the dress made a keen contrast with her archness. She was like a vivid flower springing unexpectedly from some time-stained wall — dancing, vanity, wit, pique at Reginald, and the

flattery of others made her cheek flush, her eyes flash.

"Ahem!" said she in the dry-as-dust tone of a lecturer, "ladies and gentlemen, as you will have to bear with many costumes this evening, permit me to begin with this.

"I wear it, ladies and gentlemen, because it is supposed to confer a right to be tedious — a-hem!

"I am here to attack two principal errors.

"One is that such fashions as embarrass the limbs are of a nature to last upon earth.

"The other is that pantaloons are essentially masculine and sweeping robes feminine.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we women can only predict the future by examining the past — moles and rabbits may have some other way, though I think not.

"Elisa!

> "Call back past facts with lessons fraught,
> To teach us — if we can be taught."

Elisa opened the door.

Miss Spilman, the musical associate, splashed a magnificent chord on the piano, and in sailed Queen Elizabeth. I mean a lady in the exact costume in which that queen went into the city to return thanks for the destruction of the Spanish Armada.

Set a stomacher three feet long between two monstrous jelly bags upon a bloated bell, and there you have this queen and her successor in New York.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the lecturer, "common-sense fell flatter than Spain the day royalty appeared thus.

"Could a duck make a doll, this would be the result.

"Yet this costume, as much admired once as ours is now, is only the principle of our own carried a step

farther: at the head of our principle is the sack in which rustics jump at a fair; next comes Queen Bess, and then come we.

"With us motion is *embarrassed.*

"With Queen Bess motion is *impeded.*

"With the sack motion is *obstructed.*

"In rational and therefore permanent costumes motion is *free.* *Vide* Time and the World!"

A Chord.

With a multiplicity of affectation in came a courtier the point of whose shoes touched his knees, and he seemed proud of them.

No remark was made: this thing spoke for itself.

Next a noise was heard, and with infinite difficulty a lady was squeezed in who wore the genuine hoop.

Two short-waisted ladies came in.

Everybody laughed at the sight of them.

Straight one of them burst out a-crying. This was Kitty, who was instantly attempted to be consoled (as the papers phrase it) by Mr. Fitzpatrick: he told her nothing could disguise her comeliness, and really thought so at the moment.

This dress set people talking: those who had worn it confessed to the younger ones that they had thought it beautiful, and had anticipated the destruction of nature as soon as the demise of this phase of the unnatural.

Then followed gigot sleeves.

Two chords were struck on the piano, and Miss Courtenay resumed her lecture thus: —

RECITATIVE.

"All these good people when they were here thought they must be here forever,
Or as long as men and women, and Primrose Hill and the Mississippi River;

But they proved more like the flower than the hill that bears its name —
And instead of the great Mississippi, they were bubbles floating down that same."

SONG.

"Such fashions are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, the bloom is fled;
Or like a snowflake on a river,
A moment seen, then gone forever."

"We have shown you the costumes that could not stand the shock of time:
You shall now see what sort of costumes have stood the brunt of centuries — compare the bloomers
With each in turn — and you will be on the path of truth."

Armenian, Polish, and Sicilian peasants were then introduced, whose limbs were free enough, goodness knows; they ranged themselves in a line opposite their stiff competitors — and a bloomer took up the recitative.

"All these unlike the bloomer confine the limbs and make the ribs to crack,
All those like bloomers free the mind, the body, and the back.
So hail to great Amelia who takes a sex out of a sack."

SONG.

"For grace is motion unconfined,
Like rippling sea or sweeping wind;
Free as the waves of yellow corn
That bows to greet the breezy morn."

The applause had but just subsided, when a clear, rich, quaint voice arose, and to the equal surprise of the lecturer and company, trilled forth the following stanza to some fossil tune. Chevy Chace — we really believe.

"The ass with four legs has the wit
None of those four to tether —
But there's a greater ass with two
That ties those two together."

While the others sat aghast.

"Now that was like honey dropping from the comb," exclaimed Fitzpatrick.

"Now you know, Mr Fitzpatrick, it was like vinegar distilling from a cruet," replied Miss Courtenay.

"There *was* an agreeable acidulation compared with yours, Miss Courtenay, but in itself delicious," retorted the optimist.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the modern Portia, "the first head of my lecture is before you. I am now to prove that pantaloons are not necessarily masculine nor long skirts feminine."

On this entered two Persian women in gorgeous costume and very spacious trousers.

They salaamed to Caroline and the bloomers, but seemed staggered by the other figures. Whilst they whispered and eyed the company, Caroline lectured:—

"Ladies, this costume is worn by half the well-dressed women in the world: and we must not flatter ourselves we are more eminine than Mussul women — on the contrary, these pantalooned females practise a reserve, compared with which the modesty of Europe is masculine impudence."

A Lady. Make them speak. I don't think they are women at all.

Caroline. They are women, I assure you, Miss White, for one has just borrowed a pin of me.

Miss White. Then why don't they talk?

Caroline. He! he! the inference is just. They are going to speak — unless they have forgotten all I —

Zuleima. They *have* feet, and even legs. O Holy Prophet, here are women who muffle their feet, and reveal their necks to the gaze of man.

Fatima. What dirt has this people eaten? Can this be the great Frank nation, whose ships subdue every

sea, and whose wisdom and probity are such that the evil spirit himself cannot get the better of them in making bargains: are these sea kings sprung from fools, who hide their feet which were made for show and motion, and reveal their faces and necks, which is unlawful?

Zuleima. Daughter of the Commander of the Faithful — your slave has an idea.

Fatima (with some surprise). Bismillah! In the name of the Prophet let me hear it.

Zuleima. Three revolutions of the moon are completed since we sailed in ships from Istamboul: in the mean time Sheitan has doubtless obtained permission to derange this people's intellects, that so they may be converted to the true faith. Thus, their brains being confounded, they muffle their feet, and reveal their necks without shame to the gaze of man: your slave has spoken.

Fatima. It is well spoken: it is also a nation which sups on opium — and drinks hot wine, as a camel sucks water in the desert — we will therefore sit on ottomans and laugh.

Zuleima. Be cheshm! On my eyes be it!

Fatima. Seven days.

Zuleima. And seven nights.

Fatima. At these children.

Zuleima. Of Burnt Fathers.

Fatima and Zuleima. We will laugh. Seven days
And seven nights
At these children
Of Burnt Fathers.

They then sat like little tailors on two ottomans opposite each other, and, nodding like mandarins, laughed mechanically as became people who were going to make seven nights of it.

Caroline. Adsis, O Cato. Call him, Elisa.

Elisa. If you please um would you say them words again?

Caroline. Adsis, O Cato.

Elisa. Assist us, old King Cole!

Cato swept in with a magnificent toga —

"*Adsum,*" said he, "*quis me vocat?*"

Caroline. Be pleased, sir, to tell us which are the most masculine and which the most feminine of these good souls.

Cato folded his arms and took three antique strides. "These cackling creatures," said he, "are Persian women — this (Elisa) is a native, I believe, of some barbarous country not yet under the dominion of Rome."

Elisa. Nor don't mean to.

Cato. These with black plaster stuck to them are of the genus Simii or apes. The rest with togæ, but no beards, are, I suppose, of the Epicene class — dismiss me.

A Chord.

Cato. Abeo — (chord.) Excedo — (chord.) Evado — (chord.) Erumpo — (four strides, one for each verb, took him out with a sharp and pleasing effect.)

This ended the lecture, and a dance of all ages and climes was proposed.

"I can't hop as you do nowadays," remonstrated the hoop; "I was taught to dance."

"Grace was in all my steps," said the courtier.

Said Caroline, "Dance in your own way, dress in your own way, and let your neighbors have their way — that is the best way!"

A dance was then played with no very marked accent; and mighty pleasant it was to see couples polking, couples gavotting with all the superstition of antiquated grace, and waltzes and jigs and tarantula. The sanctified solem-

nity with which polite people frisk was for this once exchanged for sly gravity and little bursts of merriment. Boom! went a gun at sea.

The great steamer was starting for England.

It was a brilliant moonlight.

There was a general move to the supper-room, which had four windows looking seaward.

One old lady lingered a moment to convey to her host her opinion of the lecture.

"You are a very clever young lady. Your lecture was very ingenious."

"I am fortunate in your friendly consideration of it, madam," said Caroline.

"The women in trousers were funny."

"If it gave my friends a smile, Miss Ruth"—

"It will make bloomers, I believe—it was as good as a play, Miss Courtenay; and I shall never enter your house again, madam." With this conclusion Miss Ruth became a vertical rod and marched off.

The next moment a servant brought Caroline a letter. She opened it. A smile with which she was listening to Fitzpatrick's admiration became a stone smile as her eyes fixed themselves on the paper. She gave a cry like one wounded, and, stretching out her hands with a tender helplessness that at once gave the lie to her dress, she sank insensible into Mr. Fitzpatrick's arms.

The steamboat was taking Reginald past her window to England.

CHAPTER V.

Several months after this event a young gentleman was seated in a study, book in hand, but by no effort could he give his mind to the book. He sighed, turned the leaves, and gave it up in despair. This was Reginald Seymour, whose offended dignity and delicacy had borne him stiffly up for five months, but could support him no longer.

He had now had leisure to remember the many high qualities of her whose one fault he had thought unpardonable. He had flung away a jewel for a single flaw — jewels are rare — he began to think he had been a fool, and to know he was wretched.

What was to be done? He had been silent so long that now he was ashamed to write, and when he had, with a great struggle, determined to make the first overtures, a letter from his sister had given him a mysterious hint that it would now be too late to attempt an accommodation.

Reginald was not one of those who babble their griefs, and cure themselves in ten days by tormenting all their friends.

He was silent, distracted, reserved.

His own family, who guessed the cause of his low spirits, respected him too much to approach the subject, or to let strangers into the secret.

They left him in peaceable enjoyment of his misery.

He thanked them in his heart, and availed himself to the full of their kind permission.

He sat in a room whose windows looked on Courtenay

Court, and in that room, in the company of the immortal dead — *s'ennuyait.*

One of these painful reveries was interrupted by a visitor, an old gentleman in black gaiters and a white head, — the Rev. James Tremaine, perpetual curate of Conyton, an old and true friend of both houses, and Reginald's tutor for many years. Mr. Tremaine had not seen his depression without interest. He was acquainted with the cause. The Seymours had few secrets from him.

Certain features in every story vary according to the side we hear it from, and Mr. Tremaine secretly congratulated Reginald on his escape from a strong-minded woman. He called, not to keep his pupil's mind fixed on the subject, but, on the contrary, to divert him from it.

After noticing with regret the young man's depression, he asked permission to be his physician.

"I see," said he, "what it is: you want some fixed intellectual pursuit. Will you allow me to recommend you one?"

"As many as you like, dear sir," said Reginald, "for I am wearied of my life; I have nothing to do," added he, thinking to throw dust in his mentor's eyes.

Mr. Tremaine took his cue, and then and there proposed to his late pupil's attention an interesting pursuit, suited to that part of the country — geology. "It is a science," said he, "which lifts you out of this ignorant present, and transports you into various stages of this earth's existence. You learn on its threshold what a mushroom in this world's great story is the author of the pyramids.

"You find that the earth was red-hot for millions of years, and spouted liquid stone like a whale. In that stone look for no sign of vegetation, and still fewer of life. Then for millions of years the heat of its upper crust has been cooling, and water depositing rubbish which has coagulated into stone; and in this stratified stone you

shall find things that lived or grew very late in the world's history, — in fact, within a few million years of mammoths, who precede man by a few thousand years only, — at least, I think so, since the flesh of mammoths has been found in ice in our own day, and was eaten by our contemporaries, the wolves."

The old gentleman then hinted, with a twinkle in the eye, that this science has also its prose; that, by breaking stones with iron in them, men have repaired their own shattered fortunes; that coal, silver, iron, and even gold are as common as dirt, though not quite so easy to come at, and that geology, really mastered, would teach its proficient the signs of their presence; brief, how much better to circulate over the face of Devonshire with hammer and book, than be a prey to weariness without the excuse of work!

Mr. Tremaine had not observed what we have: that snobs in fustian jackets without a single polysyllable to their tongues find all the gold and all the coal that is found; and science finds the crustaceonidunculæ.

Botany Mr. Tremaine recommended only as a relaxation of the more useful study; at the same time he hinted it was amusing to be able to classify plants, not by their properties, but their petals, and to call everything by its long name that belongs to twenty other things as well, instead of knowing each by its own name as the vulgar unscientific do.

"Oh, *le plaisant projet!*" exclaims my reader, "he knows the boy is in love, and prescribes geology and botany."

Well, is not one folly best cured by another? But is this sort of thing folly? especially in a youth born to fortune.

Experience is our only safe guide in all things — and experience proves that geology and botany are roads to happiness.

Other things are constantly tried in vain — these seldom fail.

Ambition is raging agitation followed by bitter disappointment.

Wit, an unruly engine, recoils on him that plays it.

Politics, love, theology, art, are full of thorns; but when you see a man perched like a crow on a rock chipping it, you see a happy dog. You who are on the lookout for beauty find irregular features or lack-lustre dolls — you who love wit are brained with puns or ill-nature, the two forms of wit that exist out of books. But the hammerist can jump out of his gig at any turn of the road and find that which his soul desires — the meanest stone a boy throws at a robin is millions of years older than the Farnese Hercules, and has a history as well as a sermon.

Stones are curious things. If a man is paid for breaking them, he is wretched; but if he can bring his mind to do it gratis, he is at the summit of content! With these men life is a felicitous dream — they are not subject to low spirits like other men; they smile away their human day; and when they are to die they don't seem to mind so very much. Can they take anything easy by giving it one of their hard names — is the grave to them a cretaceous, or argillaceous, or ferruginous bed; I beg their pardon — stratum?

No! It is because their hobbies have been innocent: and other men's hobbies are so apt to be vicious.

These have broken stones while egotists have been breaking human hearts.

Mr. Tremaine was enlarging on such topics with more eloquence and method than I, and his patient became animated with a sudden expression of surprise, hope, joy.

He looked out of the window.

The old gentleman looked too. "Ah," cried he, "I see! Yes, Reginald! that is better than science and beyond the power of art."

"Yes!" said Reginald.

"That glorious breadth of golden sunlight that streams across that foliage," continued the savant.

"Sunshine and leaves?" cried Reginald, "it is something of more importance I am looking at."

"More importance than sunshine?" said the old gentleman faintly.

"YES! SEE! LOOK! — THE SMOKE FROM THOSE CHIMNEYS!"

Mr. Tremaine looked; and Courtenay Court was smoking from a dozen chimneys at once. He was taken off his guard.

"She must be come home," said he, "or coming! (aside) plague take her!"

Reginald seized him by the hand.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. TREMAINE was right. Caroline was expected at Courtenay Court. The next day she arrived, bringing Miss Seymour, who went to her father's house.

They had been escorted across the water by Mr. Fitzpatrick; but he remained in town. Before they left New York this gentleman had declared himself Caroline's professed admirer. Caroline asked him with some archness which he loved best, her or Miss Seymour. The question staggered him for a moment, so he said, "Can you ask?" Cross-examined, however, he was brought to this, that he liked Caroline a shade better than Harriet.

During the voyage home Mr. Fitzpatrick lost a portion of his gayety, and was seen at times to be grave and perplexed; novel phenomenon.

Harriet Seymour and Caroline had got over their tiff, and indeed Harriet for months past had sided rather with her friend than her brother. "Caroline was wrong," said she, "but Reginald was more wrong. He ought to have forgiven a woman a caprice." Harriet therefore spent the evening of her arrival at home; but early next morning she rode over to Courtenay Court to bear her friend company. She was the more eager to lend her countenance because others were so hard upon her.

For the evening of her arrival Caroline was discussed at Seymour Hall. The old people, including Mr. Tremaine, spoke of her with horror; tomboy, vixen, and even strong-minded woman, from which Heaven defend us males! They congratulated themselves and Reginald on his escape from her. Reginald maintained a dogged silence. But when Harriet stoutly defended his late sweetheart, and declared that her faults were only on the surface, he cast a look of gratitude at her, that she caught and comprehended. Her defence was not quite lost on others. Mr. Tremaine asked her quietly, "Has Miss Courtenay really anything good about her?"

"Judge for yourself," replied Harriet, with a toss of the head. "Call on her. She is your parishioner."

"Humph! I don't like strong-minded women. They say she can swim into the bargain; but I certainly shall call on her, and judge with my own eyes. Her father was a worthy man."

To return, Caroline and Harriet were walking in the grounds of Courtenay Court, at some distance from the house. Harriet was lionizing the mistress, showing her her beauties, the famous old yew-tree, the narrow but deep water that meandered through her grounds, and

each admired view and nook. It was charming, and both ladies did loud admiration; and did not care a button for it all.

Harriet. Is Mr. Fitzpatrick coming to-day?

Caroline. I don't know: what a curious bridge! it looks like a long gate. Shall we cross it?

Harriet. Not for the world: the water is ever so deep.

Caroline. I did not mean to cross the water, only the bridge.

Harriet. But see how crazy it is! the wood is so old; nobody has lived here ever so long, and then it is so hard to keep on it too.

Caroline looked wistfully at the primitive bridge. "If I had my bloomer on, I would soon be over it," said she, "but this appendage would catch my feet and draggle in the water at every step."

Harriet implored her friend never to mention that word again.

"Bloomer! it is the cause we are all unhappy."

"What, are *you* unhappy? What about? Oh, he will be here to-day, dear, ten to one."

"Who, pray?"

"Mr. Fitzpatrick."

"Mr. Fitzpatrick is your lover, not mine," said Harriet, coloring all over.

"So he is. I forgot. Oh, look at the tail of your gown — three straws, two sticks, and such a long brier."

Harriet. Put your foot on it, dear. These lawyers are the plague of this county.

Caroline. Lawyers?

Harriet. I forget, you don't know our country terms; we call these long briers lawyers; because when once they got hold of you —

Caroline. I understand — all to be avoided by a little bloomer.

Harriet. Now, Caroline, don't. — I wish the woman had never been born. Let us go into the shade.

An observer of the sex might have noticed the same languor, and the same restlessness, in both these ladies, though one was Yankee and one English.

At last they fell into silence. It was Caroline who broke the silence. "Nobody comes to welcome me or even sends. How hospitable these British are! If I had quarrelled with any one in their own country, and then they came to mine, I should be generous, I should make that an excuse for holding out the hand, and being friends any way, if I could be nothing more. But the people here are not of my mind. All the worse for them. Much I care. I shall go and see where they have buried my father. I don't believe he would have died if he had not come here; and then I shall go back home across the water, to my country, where men know how to quarrel, ay, and fight, too, and then drop it when it is done with." Thus spake the Yankee girl. The English girl colored up, but she did not answer back — except by turning brimming eyes and a look of gentle reproach on her.

On this, partly because she was unhappy, partly because this mild look pricked her great though wayward heart, the Yankee girl began to cry bitterly.

On this the English girl flung her arms round the Yankee girl's neck, and cried with her.

"Dearest, he loves you still."

"Still! he never loved me, Harriet. Oh, no — he never loved me — oh, oh!"

"You forget; I have been home. I have seen **him.** He is pale — he is sad."

"That is a c—c—comfort. I wish he was at **d—d—** death's door."

"He is far more unhappy than you are."

"I am so glad — I don't believe it."

"You may believe it — I have seen it."

At this moment a servant was seen approaching; he came up, touched his hat to Caroline with a world of obsequiousness, and informed her the parson had called to see her and was in the drawing-room.

"The parson?"

"The Rev. Mr. Tremaine, miss."

"A great friend of our family," explained Harriet.

"Ah, tell me all about him as we go along."

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Tremaine. Will she receive me in a bloomer?

Harriet. I don't know — I hope not. She was decent a minute ago.

Tremaine. Perhaps she has gone to put one on.

Harriet gave a start, and had a misgiving, Caroline being a devil. "Heaven forbid!" she cried. "I will go and see."

The next minute a young lady of singular beauty and grace glided into the room. She was dressed richly but very plainly. Mr. Tremaine looked at her with surprise. "Are you Miss Courtenay?" She smiled sweetly and told him she was Miss Courtenay. She added that Mr. Tremaine was no stranger to her; she had often heard of him and his virtues in happier days. After that she thanked him for being the first to welcome her home.

"We shall all feel flattered at your calling it home, Miss Courtenay; we must try and keep you here after that."

In about ten minutes the intelligent young beauty had not only dissolved Mr. Tremaine's prejudices against

her, but had substituted a strong prejudice in her favor.

"This quiet, ladylike, dignified, gentle, amiable, beautiful young woman a tomboy?" said he to himself. "I don't believe it — it surpasses belief — it is false!"

There was a pause.

"Miss Courtenay," began the old gentleman, "your late father, during the short time he was among us, gained the respect of the whole county. I cannot help thinking you will be his successor in our esteem as well as in Courtenay Court."

Miss Courtenay bowed with quiet dignity.

"The worst of it is, we are an old-fashioned people here in Devonshire. We are strait-laced — ahem — in short — shall I be presuming too far on our short acquaintance if (pray give me credit for friendly motives) I ask permission to put you a question? But no, when I look at you — it is impossible."

"What is impossible, sir?"

"That you can ever have" — and the old gentleman flushed a bit; "by the by, they say you can swim, Miss Courtenay."

"A little, not worth boasting of," replied Caroline, modestly. "I think I could make shift to swim across this room, if the sea was in it."

"Oh, no farther than that? well, there is not much harm in that. But they do say, you have done us the honor, ahem — to wear male habiliments — is that true?"

"Indeed, Mr. Tremaine, I have; let — me — see, I think it was at a fancy ball, — in my own house — at New York." The words were said with assumed carelessness and candor.

"What, on no other occasion?"

"On no other public occasion — why?" inquired Caroline *so* innocently.

"Then, really, I think too much has been made of it. But you are said to advocate the bloomer costume."

"I have often advocated it, in words, sir; but wearing it is a different matter, you know."

"Very different, very different indeed," said Tremaine, hastily.

"I could not help advocating it; its adversaries argued so weakly against it. Shall I repeat their arguments and my own?"

"If you please."

Caroline, with the calm indifference of a judge, stated the usual arguments pro and con, and did not fail to dwell upon the trousers of Eastern women. Mr. Tremaine took her up.

"There is a flaw in your reasoning, I think," said he; "those Eastern women distinguish themselves from men by a thick veil — they all wear a thick veil. It appears to me that the true argument against bloomer has never been laid before you. It is this: in every civilized nation, the entire sexes are distinguished by some marked costume. But bloomer proposes that one-third of the women should be at variance with the other two-thirds."

"Oh, no, sir! she is for dressing them all in bloomers."

"No, excuse me; how would old women and fat women look in a bloomer? How would young matrons look at that period when a woman is most a woman? No; the dress for women must clearly be some dress that becomes all women, at all times and occasions of life. There are plenty of boys of sixteen or seventeen, who could be dressed as women, and eclipse all the women in a ball-room; but it would be indelicate and unmanly. You, with your youthful, symmetrical figure,

could eclipse most young men in their own habiliments: but it would be indelicate and unwomanly. Forgive me; I distress you."

"No, sir! but you convince me; and that is new to me. I admit this argument at once; and so I would have done six months ago; but no one had the intelligence to put the matter to me so," said the sly thing.

"You seem to be a very reasonable young lady."

"It is the only merit I have."

"Permit me to contradict you again. Well, then, since the bloomer difficulty is despatched, let me have the honor and the happiness of reconciling an honorable young man with the most charming young lady I have met with this many a day."

The charming young lady froze directly.

"I will not affect to misunderstand you, sir; but the difference between Mr. Seymour and myself lies deeper than this paltry dress: lies too deep for you to cure: the bloomer was a mere pretext. Mr. Seymour did not love me."

"Excuse me; I know better."

"When we love people, we forgive their faults: we forgive their virtues even."

Mr. Tremaine looked at her with some surprise. The Devonshire ladies had not tongues so pointed as the fair Yankee's.

"He did love you — he does love you."

"No, Mr. Tremaine — no. Was that a fault for any one who really loved me, to quarrel out and out with a spoiled child for?" Here two tears, one real, the other crocodile, ran down her lovely cheeks, and did the poor old gentleman's business entirely. "He deserves to be hanged," cried he jumping up, in great haste, "young fool! But he does love you tenderly, sincerely. He has never been happy since. He never will be

happy till you are reconciled to him. He is waiting in great anxiety for my return. I shall tell him to ride over here, and just — go — down — on — his — knees to you, and ask your forgiveness. Then will you forgive him?"

"I will try, sir," said Caroline, doubtfully; "but he owes much to his advocate, and so you may tell him."

"I shall be vain enough to tell him so, you may depend;" and away went Mr. Tremaine, Caroline's devoted champion through thick and thin from this hour. As he rode away, zeal and benevolence shining through him, Caroline said dryly to herself, "I am your friend for life, old boy."

Harriet came in and heard the news; she was delighted.

"Reginald will be here as fast as his horse's feet can carry him. Mr. Tremaine is all powerful in our house."

"So I concluded from what you told me," said Caroline, demurely; "and I — hem — will you excuse me for half an hour?"

"Yes, dear; you will find me on the lawn."

Full three-quarters of an hour had elapsed, and Harriet was beginning to wonder what had become of her friend, when a musical laugh rang behind her. She turned round, and beheld a sight that made her scream with terror and dismay — there stood Caroline in PROPRIA QUÆ MARIBUS as bold as brass.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE face of uneasy defiance Caroline got up when Harriet faced her was truly delicious.

"It is all over," gasped Harriet, "you are incurable."

"He loves me," explained Caroline; "when I felt like giving in, I didn't think he loved me."

Harriet made no reply; she marched off stiffly. The bloomer followed and tried to appease her by reminding her how hard it was to give in as long as a chance of victory remained — "Hard — it is impossible — it hurts!"

No answer.

"It was all that dear old man's fault for letting out that **he** loves me still, and he is unhappy; so then he is in my power, and I can't give in now — and I won't. No. Let us see whether it is me or my clothes he loves — ah, ah! Oh, my dear girl, here he comes; let me get behind you. Oh, dear, I wish I hadn't."

Sure enough, Reginald was coming down to the other side of the stream.

Caroline got half behind Harriet.

Reginald came along the bridge to join them.

"I wish it would break down," whined Caroline. "Then I'd run home, and I know what I would do."

The words were out of her mouth and no more, when some portion of the rotten wood gave way, and splash goes Reginald into the water.

Harriet screamed. Caroline laughed.

Her laughter was soon turned to dismay. Reginald

sank; he came up and struggled towards the wood-work, but in vain: the current had carried him a yard or two from it, and even that small space he could not recover. He was too proud to cry for help, but he was drowning.

"He can't swim," cried Caroline, and she darted into the stream like a water spaniel. In two strokes she was beside him, and seized him by the hair. One stroke took her to the remnant of the bridge. "Lay hold of that, Reginald," she cried. He obeyed, and, while she swam ashore, he worked along the wooden bridge to the bank.

The moment she saw him safe, she began to laugh again; and then what does my lady do but set off running home full pelt before he could say a word to her! He followed her crying, "Caroline, Caroline!" It was no use: she was in her bloomer and had the start, and ran like a doe.

"O Reginald! go home and change your clothes," cried the tender Harriet.

"What, go home before I have thanked my guardian angel, my beloved?"

"Your guardian angel must change her clothes, and you must change yours; you will catch your death."

"At least tell her she shall wear what she pleases; tell her" —

"I will tell her nothing; come and tell it her yourself, frightening me so. Her bloomer is spoiled forever now, that is one comfort."

Reginald ran to the stables, got his horse, galloped home, dressed himself, and galloped back, and came into Caroline's drawing-room open mouthed. "Wear what you like, dear Caroline; why, you are in a gown! No matter — forgive me — oh, forgive me — I have been ungrateful once — I never will again. My beloved, what, did I not owe you enough before, that you must

save my life? O Caroline, one word; can the devotion of a life restore me the treasure I once had, and trifled with — for what?" then he fell to kissing her hands and her gown. Then she, seeing him quite overcome, was all woman.

"Reginald," she murmured, and sank upon his neck, all her strength of mind dissolving in tears and love.

"What did you say about bloomer, Reginald dear?"

"I said you should wear what you liked, sweet one."

"Ah, then we are never to agree, for I mean to wear whatever you like."

This was "the way to take her," one of that sort; they are to be made slaves of just as easily as the hen-hearted ones. But ye mustn't show 'em the chain!

Afternoon came Fitz.

Caroline. Mr. Fitzpatrick, will you come here?

Fitzpatrick. I will. An Irishman always consents, but never says "yes."

Caroline (with a twinkle in her eye). Will you do me a favor?

Fitzpatrick. I will.

Caroline. Do you see that lady sitting there? (Harriet.)

Fitzpatrick (coloring). I do.

Caroline. Go and marry her.

And she gave him a push that seemed less than a feather, but somehow it propelled Fitz all across the room, and sent him down on his knees before Harriet. N.B. There were only these three in the room.

Mr. Tremaine married two couples in one day — Reginald and Caroline; Fitzpatrick and Harriet. I ought to explain to those who have not seen it, that during the voyage Fitz had discovered it was Harriet he loved a *soupçon* the best of the two.

At the wedding breakfast, arrayed in white and adorned with wreaths, both the Yankee and the English beauty were intolerably lovely.

No one seemed more conscious of this double fact than Fitz. Caroline observed his looks, and took occasion to say to him confidentially, "Wouldn't you like to have married both ladies? Now, come, tell the truth."

"Indeed and I would," replied the candid Celt, unconscious of any satire in the question.

America takes two hundred thousand English every year. We have got this one Yankee in return, and we mean to keep her.

A year after they had been married she wanted to give her bloomer to one of the stable-boys. "What, the dress you saved my life in?" cried Reginald. "I would not part with it to a prince, for the price of a king's ransom."

Lads and lasses, this trifle is what I have called it, "a *jeu d'esprit*," written for your amusement, and not intended to improve you, instruct you, or elevate your morals.

A thing not to be approved in general, but excused once in a way, methinks.

— Neque semper arcum
Tendit Apollo.

III

ART: A DRAMATIC TALE

EARLY in the last century two young women were talking together in a large apartment, richly furnished. One of these was Susan, cousin and dependent of Mrs. Anne Oldfield; the other was a flower-girl, whom that lady had fascinated by her scenic talent. The poor girl was but one of many persons over whom Mrs. Oldfield had cast a spell, and yet this actress had not reached the zenith of her reputation.

The town, which does not always know its own mind about actors, applauded one or two of her rivals more than her, and fancied it admired them more.

Oldfield was the woman (there is always one) who used the tones of nature upon the stage in that day. She ranted at times like her neighbors, but she never ranted out of tune, like them. Her declamation was nature, *alias* art, thundering; theirs was artifice raving. Her treatment of words was as follows: she mastered them in the tone of household speech; she then gradually built up these simple tones into a gorgeous edifice of music and meaning; but though dilated, heightened, and embellished, they never lost their original truth. Her rivals started from a lie, so the higher they soared the further they left truth behind them. They do the same thing now pretty universally.

The public is a very good judge, and no judge at all, of such matters. I will explain.

Let the stage voice and the dramatic voice, the artificial and the artistic, the bastard and the legitimate, the false and the true, be kept apart upon separate stages, and there is no security that the public will not, as far as hands go, applaud the monotone or lie more than the melodious truth. But set the lie and the truth side by side upon fair terms, and the public becomes what the critics of this particular art have never been, — a critic; and stage bubbles, that have bubbled for years, are liable to burst in a single night.

Mrs. Oldfield was wise enough, even in her generation, to know that the public's powers of comparison require that the things to be compared shall be placed cheek by jowl before it; and this is why she had for some time manœuvred to play, foot to foot, against Mrs. Bracegirdle, the champion of the stage.

Bracegirdle, strong in position, tradition, face, figure, and many qualities of an actor, was by no means sorry of an opportunity to quench a rising rival; and thus the two ladies were to act together in the "Rival Queens," within a few days of our story.

Roxana . . . . . MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.
Statira . . . . . MRS. OLDFIELD.

The town, whose heart at that epoch was in the theatre, awaited this singular struggle in a state of burning excitement we can no longer realize.

Susan Oldfield, first cousin of the tragedian, was a dramatic aspirant. Anne's success having travelled into the provinces, her aunt, Susan's mother, said to Susan, who was making a cream cheese, "You go an' act too, lass."

"I will," said Susan, a-making of cream cheese.

Anne's mother remonstrated: "She can't do it."

"Why not, sister?" said Susan's mother, sharply.

Then ensued some reasoning.

"Anne," said the tragedian's mother, "was born clever. I can't account for it. She was always mimicking. She took off the exciseman, and the farmers, and her grandmother, and the very parson. How she used to make us laugh! Mimicking! why, it was like a looking-glass, and the folk standing in front of it, and speaking behind it, all at one time. Once I made her take me off: she was very loath, poor lass. I think she knew she could not do it so well as the rest. It wasn't like, though it made them all laugh more than the others; but the others were as like as fagot to fagot. Now Susan, she can't take off anything, without 'tis the scald cream from the milk, and I've seen me beat her at that. I'm not bragging."

To this piece of ratiocination Susan's mother opposed the following: —

"Talent is in the blood," said she (this implies that great are all the first cousins of the great).

Anne's mother might have weakened this by examples at her own door; to wit, the exciseman, who was a clever fellow, and his son an ass. But she preferred keeping within her own line of argument, and as the ladies floated, by a law of their nature, away from that to which lawyers tend, an issue, they drifted divaguely over the great pacific ocean of feminine logic. At last a light shot into Susan's mamma; she found terra firma; i.e., an argument too strong for refutation.

"Besides, Jane," said she, "I want your Susan to churn! So there's an end!"

Alas! she had underrated the rival disputant. Susan's mother took refuge in an argument equally irrefragable: she packed up the girl's things that night, and sent her off by coach to Anne next morning.

Susan arrived, told her story and her hopes on Anne's neck. Anne laughed, and made room for her on the

third floor. The cousins went to the theatre that evening, the aspirant in front.

Susan passed through various emotions, and when Belvidera "gazed, turned giddy, raved and died," she ran to the stage-door, with some misgivings, whether she might not be wanted to lay her cousin out. In Anne's dressing-room she found a laughing dame, who, whilst wiping off her rouge, told her she was a fool, and asked her rather sharply, "how it went?"

"The people clapped their hands! I could have kissed them," said Susan.

"As if I could not hear that, child," said Anne. "I want to know how many cried where you were."

"Now, how can I tell you, cousin, when I could not see for crying myself?"

"You cried, did you? I am very glad of that!"

"La, cousin!"

"It does not prove much, but it proves more than their clapping of hands. You shall be my barber's block — you don't understand me — all the better — come home to supper."

At supper the tragedian made the dairy-maid tell her every little village event; and, in her turn, recalled all the rural personages; and, reviving the trick of her early youth, imitated their looks, manners, and sentiments, to the life.

She began with the exciseman, and ended with the curate — a white-headed old gentleman, all learning, piety, and simplicity. He had seen in this beautiful and gifted woman only a lamb that he was to lead up to heaven — please God.

The naughtiest things we do are sure to be the cleverest, and this imitation made Susan laugh more than the others.

But in the midst of it, the mimic suddenly paused, and

her eye seemed to turn inwards; she was quite silent for a moment.

Ah! Oldfield, in that one moment, I am sure your heart has drunk many a past year. It is away to the banks of Trent, to grass and flowers, and days of innocence, to church-bells and a cottage porch, and your mother's bosom, my poor woman — princess of the stage.

She faltered out, "But he was a good man. Oh! yes! yes! yes! he was a good man; he admired me more than he would now! None like him shine on my path now." And she burst into a fit of crying.

Susan cried with her, without in the least knowing what was the matter. And these most dissimilar beings soon learned to love one another. The next day Anne took the gauge of Susan's entire intellects; and, by way of comment on the text of Susan, connected her with dramatic poetry as Mrs. Oldfield's dresser.

Susan then had been installed about three months, when she was holding that conversation with the flower-girl, which I have too long interrupted.

"It is an odd thing to say, but I think you are in love with my cousin Anne."

"I don't know," was the answer. "I am drawn to her by something I cannot resist: I followed her home for three months before I spoke to you. Will she not be angry at my presumption?"

"La! Of course not; it is not as if you were one of those impudent men that follow her about, and slip notes into every mortal thing — her carriage, her prayer-book."

Now Susan happened to be laying out the new dress for Statira, which had just come in; and, in a manner singularly *apropos*, no less than two nice little notes fell out of it as she spoke.

The girls looked at them, as they lay on the floor, like deer looking askant at a lap-dog.

"Oh!" said the votary of Flora; "they ought to be ashamed."

"So they ought," cried Susan. "I'd say nothing," added she, "if some of them were for me. But I shall have them when I am an actress."

"Are you to be that? Ah! you will never be like *her!*"

"Why not? She is only my mother's sister's daughter, bless you. Anne was only a country lass like me at first starting, and that is why my mother sent me here, because when talent is in a family, don't let one churn all the butter, says she."

"But can you act?" interposed the other.

"Can't I?" was the answer.

"'His fame survives the world in deathless story,
Nor heaven and earth combined can match his glory.'"

These lines, which in our day would be thought a leetle hyperbolical, Susan recited with gestures equally supernatural.

"Bless you," added she, complacently; "I could act fast enough, if I could but get the words off. Can you read?"

"Yes!"

"Handwriting? Tell the truth now."

"Yes! I can indeed."

"Handwriting is hard, is it not?" said Susan; "but a part beats all: did you ever see a part?"

"No."

"Well, I'll tell ye, girl! there comes a great scratch, and then some words: but don't you go for to say those words, because they belong to another gentleman, and he mightn't like it. Then you come in, and then another

scratch. And I declare it would puzzle Old Scratch to clear the curds from the whey" —

Susan suddenly interrupted herself, for she had caught sight of a lady slowly approaching from an adjoining room, the door of which was open. "Hush!" cried Susan; "here she is! alack, she is not well! Oh, dear! she is far from well!" And, in point of fact, the lady slowly entered the apartment, laboring visibly under a weight of disease. The poor flower-girl, naturally thinking this no time for her introduction, dropped a bouquet on the table, and retreated precipitately from the den of the sick lioness.

Then the lady opened her lips, and faltered forth the following sentence: —

"I go no further, let me rest here, Œnone!"

"Do, cousin!" said Susan, consolingly.

"I droop, I sink, my strength abandons me!" said the poor invalid.

"Here's a chair for y' Anne," cried Susan. "What is the matter?"

On this, the other, fixing her filmy eyes upon her, explained slowly and faintly, that "Her eyes were dazzled with returning day; her trembling limbs refused their wonted stay."

"Ah!" sighed she, and tottered towards the chair.

"She's going to faint — she's going to faint!" cried poor Susan. "Oh, dear! Here, quick! smell to this, Anne."

"That will do, then," said the other, in a hard, unfeeling tone. "I am fortunate to have satisfied your judgment, madam," added she.

Susan stood petrified, in the act of lunging with the smelling-bottle.

"That is the way I come on in that scene," explained Mrs. Oldfield, yawning in Susan's sympathetic face.

"Acting, by jingo!" screamed Susan. "You ought to be ashamed; I thought you were a dead woman. I wish you wouldn't," cried she, flying at her like a hen; "tormenting us at home, when there's nobody to see."

"It is my system — I aim at truth. You are unsophisticated, and I experiment on you," was the cool excuse.

"Cousin, when am *I* to be an actress?" inquired Susan.

"After fifteen years' labor, perhaps," was the encouraging response.

"Labor! I thought it was all in—spi—ration!"

"Many think so, and find their error. Labor and art are the foundation — inspiration is the result."

"O Anne," cried Susan, "now do tell me your feelings in the theatre."

"Well, Susan, first, I cast my eyes around, and try to count the house."

"No, no, Anne; I don't mean that."

"Well, then, child, at times upon the scene — mind, I say at times — the present does fade from my soul, and the great past lives and burns again; the boards seem buoyant air beneath me, child; that sea of English heads floats like a dream before me, and I breathe old Greece and Rome. I ride on the whirlwind of the poet's words, and wave my sceptre like a queen — ay, and a queen I am! — for kings govern millions of bodies, but I sway a thousand hearts! But, to tell the truth, Susan, when all is over, I sink back to woman — and often my mind goes home, dear, to our native town, where Trent glides so calmly through the meadows. I pine to be by his side, far from the dust of the scene, and the din of life — to take the riches of my heart from flatterers, strangers, and the world, and give them all, all, to one faithful heart, large, full and loving as my own! Where's my

dress for Statira, hussy ?" She snapped this last with a marvellous quick change of key, and a sudden sharpness of tone peculiar to actresses when stage dresses are in question.

"Here it is. Oh! isn't it superb ?"

"Yes, it is superb," said Oldfield, dryly; "velvet, satin, and ostrich feathers, for an Eastern queen. The same costume for Belvidera, Statira, Clytemnestra, and Mrs. Dobbs. O prejudice! prejudice! The stage has always been fortified against common-sense! Velvet Greeks, periwigged Romans — the audience mingling with the scene — past and present blundered together! English fops in the Roman forum, taking snuff under a Roman matron's nose (that's me), and cackling out that she does it nothing like (no more she does) — nothing like Peggy Porteous — whose merit was, that she died thirty years ago, whose merit would have been greater had she died fifty years ago, and much greater still had she never lived at all."

Here Susan offered her half a dozen letters, including the smuggled notes; but the sweet-tempered soul (being for the moment in her tantrums) would not look at them. "I know what they are," said she: "vanity, in marvellous thin disguises; my flatterers are so eloquent, that they will persuade me into marrying poor old Mannering — every morning he writes me four pages, and tells me my duty; every evening he neglects his own and goes to the theatre, which is unbecoming his age, I think."

"He looks a very wise gentleman," observed Susan.

"He does," was the rejoinder; "but his folly reconciles me in some degree to his wisdom; so, mark my words, I shall marry my silly sage. There, burn all the rest but his — no! don't burn the letter in verse."

"In verse ?"

"Yes! I won't have him burnt either — for he loves

me, poor boy — find it, Susan; he never misses a day. I think I should like to know that one."

"I think this is it," said Susan.

"Then read it out expressively, whilst I mend this collar. So then I shall estimate your progress to the temple of Fame, ma'am."

It is not easy to do justice on paper to Susan's recitative; but, in fact, she read it much as schoolboys scan, and what she read to her cousin for a poet's love hopped thus: —

"Excūse — mĕ dēār — ĕst frīēnd — ĭf I — shoŭld appēār
Tŏŏ prēss — ĭng būt — ăt mȳ — yeărs ōne — hăs nōt
Mŭch tīme — tŏ lōse — ănd yōūr — gŏŏd sēnse — I fēēl" —

"My good sense!" cried Mrs. Oldfield; "how can that be poetry?"

"It is poetry, I know," remonstrated Susan. "See, cousin, it's all of a length."

"All of a length with your wit — that is the Mannering prose."

"Drat them, if they write in lines, how is one to know their prose from their verse?" said Susan, spitefully.

"I'll tell you, Susan," said the other, soothingly; "their prose is something as like Mannering as can be, their verse is something in this style: —

'You were not made to live from age to age;
The dairy yawns for you — and not the stage!'

"He, he!"

She found what she sought, and reading out herself the unknown writer's verses, she said, with some feminine complacency, "Yes, this is a heart I have really penetrated."

"I've penetrated one too," said Susan.

"Indeed!" was the reply, "how did you contrive that — not with the spit, I hope?"

Thus encouraged, Susan delivered herself most volubly of a secret that had long burned in her. She proceeded to relate how she observed a young gentleman always standing by the stage-door as they got into their chariot, and when they reached home, somehow he was always standing there too. "It was not for you, this one," said Susan, hastily, "because you are so wrapped up, he could not see you." Then she told her cousin how, once when they were walking separately, this same young gentleman had said to her most tenderly, "Madam, you are in the service of Mrs. Oldfield?" and, on another occasion, he had got as far as "Madam," when, unfortunately, her cousin looked round, and he vanished. Susan, then throwing off the remains of her reserve, and clasping her hands together, confessed she admired him as much as he did her. Susan gave this reason for her affection: "He is, for all the world, like one of the young tragedy princes, and you know what ducks they are."

"I do, to my cost," was the caustic reply. "I wish, instead of talking about this silly lover of yours, who must be a fool, or he would have made a fool of you long ago, you would find out who is the brave young gentleman who risked his life for me last month. Now I think of it, I am quite interested in him."

"Risked his life! and you never told me, Anne!"

"Robert told you, of course."

"No, indeed."

"Did he not? Then I will tell you the whole story. You have heard me speak of the Duchess of Tadcaster?"

"No, cousin, never."

"I wonder at that! Well, she and Lady Betty Bertie and I used to stroll in Richmond Park with our arms

round one another's waists, like the Graces, more or less, and kiss one another, ugh! and swear a deathless friendship, like liars and fools as we are. But Her Grace of Tadcaster had never anything to do, and I had my business; so I could not always be plagued with her; so for this, the little idiot now aspires to my enmity, and knowing none but the most vulgar ways of showing a sentiment, she bids her coachman drive her empty carriage against mine, containing me. Child, I thought the world was at an end: the glasses were broken, the wheels locked, and all my little sins began to appear such big ones to me; and the *brute* kept whipping the *horses*, and they plunged so horribly, when a brave young gentleman sprang to their heads, tore them away, and gave her nasty coachman such a caning." Here Oldfield clenched a charming white fist; then, lifting up her eyes, she said tenderly, "Heaven grant no harm befell him afterwards, for I drove off and left him to his fate."

Charming sensibility! an actress's!

In return for this anecdote, Susan was about to communicate some further particulars on the subject which occupied all her secret thoughts, when she was interrupted by a noise and scuffle in the anteroom, high above which were heard the loud, harsh tones of a stranger's voice, exclaiming, "But I tell ye I will see her, ye saucy Jack."

Before this personage bursts upon Mrs. Oldfield, and the rest of us, I must go back and take up the other end of my knot in the ancient town of Coventry.

Nathan Oldworthy dwelt there; a flourishing attorney; he had been a clerk; he came to be the master of clerks; his own ambition was satisfied; but his son Alexander, a youth of parts, became the centre of a second ambition. Alexander was to embrace the higher branch of the legal profession; was to be first pleader, then barrister,

then King's counsel — lastly, a judge; and contemporaneously with this final distinction, the old attorney was to sing "*Nunc Dimittis*," and "*Capias*" no more.

Bystanders are obliging enough to laugh at such schemes; but why? The heart is given to them, and they are no laughing matter to those who form them: such schemes destroyed, the flavor is taken out of human lives.

When Nathan sent his son to London, it was a proud though a sad day for him; hitherto he had looked upon their parting merely as the first step of a glorious ladder, but when the coach took young Alexander out of sight, the father found how much he loved him, and paced very, very slowly home, while Alexander glided contentedly on towards London.

Now, "London" means a different thing to every one of us: to one, it is the Temple of Commerce; to another, of Themis; to a third, of Thespis; and to a fourth, of the Paphian Venus, and so on, because we are all much narrower than men ought to be. To Nathan Oldworthy it was the sacred spot where grin the courts of law. To Alexander it was the sacred spot where (being from the country) he thought to find the nine Muses in bodily presence — his favorite Melpomene at their head. Nathan knew next to nothing about his own son, a not uncommon arrangement. Alexander, upon the whole, rather loathed law, and adored poetry. In those days youth had not learned to "frown in a glass, and write odes to despair," and be dubbed a duck by tender beauty confounding sulks with sorrow. Alexander had to woo the Muse clandestinely, and so wooed her sincerely. He went with a manuscript tragedy in his pocket, called "Berenice," which he had re-written and re-shaped three several times; with a head full of ideas, and a heart tuned to truth, beauty, and goodness. Arrived there, he

was installed in the neighborhood, and under the secret surveillance of his father's friend, Timothy Bateman, solicitor, of Gray's Inn.

If you had asked Alexander Oldworthy, upon the coach, who is the greatest of mankind, his answer would have been instantaneous: "A true poet!" But the first evening he spent in London raised a doubt of this in his mind, for he discovered a being brighter, nobler, truer, greater than even a poet.

At four Alexander reached London. At five he was in his first theatre.

That sense of the beautiful, which belongs to genius, made him see beauty in the semi-circular sweep of the glowing boxes; in gilt ornaments glorious with light; and, above all, in human beings gayly dressed, and radiant with expectation. And all these things are beautiful; only gross rustic senses cannot see it, and blunted town senses can see it no longer.

Before the play began, music attacked him on another side; and all combined with youth and novelty to raise him to a high key of intellectual enjoyment: and when the ample curtain rose slowly and majestically upon Mr. Otway's tragedy of "Venice Preserved," it was an era in this young life.

Poetry rose from the dead before his eyes this night. She lay no longer entombed in print. She floated around the scene, ethereal, but palpable. She breathed and burned in heroic shapes, and godlike tones, and looks of fire.

Presently, there glided among the other figures one that by enchantment seized the poet's eye, and made all that his predecessors had ever writ in praise of grace and beauty seem tame by comparison.

She spoke, and his frame vibrated to this voice. All his senses drank in her great perfections, and he thrilled

with wonder and enthusiastic joy, that this our earth contained such a being. He seemed to see the Eve of Milton with Madonna's glory crowning her head, and immortal music gushing from her lips.

The lady was Mrs. Oldfield — the Belvidera of the play.

Alexander thought he knew "Venice Preserved" before this; but he found, as the greatest wits must submit to discover, that in the closet a good play is but the corpse of a play; the stage gives it life. (The printed words of a play are about one-third of a play; the tones and varying melodies of beautiful and artful speech are another third; and the business, gesture, and that great visible story, the expression of the speaking, and the dumb play of the silent actors, is another third.)

Belvidera's voice, full, sweet, rich, piercing, and melodious, and still in its vast compass true to the varying sentiment of all she uttered, seemed to impregnate every line with double meaning, and treble beauty. Her author dilated into giant size and godlike beauty at the touch of that voice. And when she was silent, she still spoke to Alexander's eye, for her face was more eloquent than vulgar tongues are. Her dumb play from the first to the last moment of the scene was in as high a key as her elocution. Had she not spoken one single word, still she would have written in the air by the side of Otway's syllables, a great pictorial narrative, that filled all the chinks of his sketch with most rare and excellent colors of true flesh tint, and made that sketch a picture.

Here was a new art for our poet; and as, by that just arrangement which pervades the universe, "acting" is the most triumphant of all the arts, to compensate it for being the most evanescent, what wonder that he thrilled beneath its magic, and worshipped its priestess?

He went home filled with a new sense of being — all seemed cold, dark, and tame, until he could return and see this poetess-orator-witch and her enchantments once more.

In those days they varied the entertainments in London almost as they do in the provinces now; and Alexander, who went to the theatre six nights a week, saw Mrs. Oldfield's beauty and talent in many shapes. Her power of distinct personation was very great. Her Andromache, her Ismena, and Belvidera were all different beings. Also each of her tragic personations left upon the mind a type. One night young Oldworthy saw majesty, another tenderness, another fiery passion, personified and embodied in a poetic creation.

But a fresh surprise was in store for him: the next week comedy happened to be in the ascendant; and Mrs. Oldfield, whose *entrée* in character was always the keynote of her personation, sprang upon the stage as Lady Townley, and in a moment the air seemed to fill with singing birds that chirped the pleasures of youth, beauty, and fashion in notes that sparkled like diamonds, stars, and prisms. Her genuine, gushing gayety warmed the coldest and cheered the forlornest heart. Nor was she less charming in the last act, where Lady Townley's good-sense being at last alarmed, and her good heart touched, she bowed her saucy head, and begged her lord's pardon, with tender, unaffected penitence. The tears stood thick in Alexander's eyes during that charming scene, where in a prose comedy, the author has had the courage and the beauty to spread his wings and rise in a moment into verse with the rising sentiment.

To this succeeded "Maria" in "The Nonjuror," and "Indiana" in what the good souls of that day were pleased to call the comedy of "The Conscious Lovers," in the course of which comedy Indiana made Alexander

weep more constantly, continuously, and copiously than in all the tragedies of the epoch he had as yet witnessed.

So now Alexander Oldworthy lived for the stage; and, as the pearl is a disease of the oyster, so this siren became Alexander's disease. The enthusiast lost his hold of real life. Real life became to him an *interlude*, and soon that followed which was to be expected, — the poor novice who had begun by adoring the artist ended by loving the woman, and he loved her like a novice and a poet: he looked into his own heart, confounded it with hers, and clothed her with every heroic quality. He believed her as great in mind, and as good in heart, as she was lovely in person; and he would have given poems to be permitted to kiss her dress, or to lay his neck for a moment under her foot. Burning to attract her attention, yet too humble and timid to make an open attempt, he had at last recourse to his own art. Every day he wrote verses upon her, and sent them to her house. Every night after the play he watched at the stage-door for a glimpse of her as she came out of the theatre to her carriage, and, being lighter of foot than the carriage horses of his century, he generally managed to catch another glimpse of her as she stepped from her carriage into her own house.

But all this led to no results, and Alexander's heart was often very cold and sick. Whilst he sat at the play he was in Elysium; but when, after seeing his divinity vanish, he returned to his lodgings, and looked at his attachment by the light of one candle, despondency fell like a weight of ice upon him, and he was miserable till he had written her some verses. The verses writ, he was miserable till play-time.

One night he stood, as usual, at the stage-door after the performance watching for Mrs. Oldfield, who, in a

general way, was accompanied by her cousin Susan. This night, however, she was alone; and, having seen her enter her chariot, Alexander was about to start for her house to see her get down from it, when suddenly another carriage came into contact with Mrs. Oldfield's. The collision was violent, and Mrs. Oldfield screamed with unaffected terror, at which scream Alexander sprang to the horses of the other carriage, and, seizing one of them just above the curb, drew him violently back. To his surprise, instead of co-operating with him, the adverse coachman whipped both his horses, and, whether by accident or design, the lash fell twice on Alexander. Jehu never made a worse investment of whipcord. The young man drew himself back upon the pavement, and sprang with a single bound upon the near horse's quarters, from thence to the coach-box. Contemporaneously with his arrival there he knocked the coachman out of his seat on to the roof of his carriage, and then seized his whip, broke it in one moment into a stick, and belabored the prostrate charioteer till the blood poured from him in torrents. Then, springing to the ground with one bound, he turned the horses' heads, threshed them with the mutilated whip, and off they trotted gently home.

Alexander ran to Mrs. Oldfield's carriage-window, his cheeks burning, his eyes blazing. "They are gone, madam," said he, with rough timidity. The actress looked at him, and smiled on him, and said, "So I see, sir, and I am much obleeged to you." She was then about to draw back to her corner, but suddenly she reflected, and half beckoning Alexander, who had drawn back, she said, "My dear, learn for me whose carriage that was." Alexander turned to gain the information, but it was volunteered by one of the bystanders.

"It is the Duchess of Tadcaster's, Mrs. Oldfield."

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Oldfield, "the little wretch! (This polite phrase she uttered with a most majestic force of sovereign contempt.) Thank you, sir. Bid Robert drive me home, my child" (this to Alexander), on which a bystander sang out, "You are to drive home, Robert,— Buckingham Gate, the corner house."

At this sally Mrs. Oldfield smiled with perfect composure, but did not look at the speaker. As the carriage moved she leaned gently forward, and kissed her hand like a queen to Alexander, then nestled into her corner and went to sleep.

Alexander did nothing of the sort that night. He went home on wings. He could not go in. He walked up and down before his door three hours, before he could go to so vulgar a thing as bed. As a lover will read over fifty times six lines of love from the beloved hand, so Alexander acted over and over the little scene of this night, and dwelt on every tone, word, look, and gesture of the great creature who had at last spoken to him, smiled on him, thanked him. Oh, how happy he was! he could hardly realize his bliss. "My dear;" but had not his ears deceived him? — had she really called him "my dear," and what was he to understand by so unexpected an address? was it on account of the service he had just done her, or might he venture to hope she had noticed his face in the theatre, sitting, as he always did, in one place, at the side of the second row of the pit? but no! he rejected that as impossible. Whatever she meant by it, his blood was at her service as well as his heart. He blessed her with tears in his eyes for using such heavenly words to him in any sense — "my dear," and "my child." He framed these words in his heart.

Alas! he little thought that "my dear" meant literally nothing — he was not aware that calling every living creature "my dear" is one of the nasty little tricks of

the stage — like their swearing without anger, and their shovelling snuff into their nose without intermission, in the innocent hope of making every sentence intellectual, by a dirty thing done mechanically, and not intellectually. As for "my child," that was better — that was, at least, a trick of the lady's own, partly caught from her French acquaintances.

For some days Alexander was in heaven. He fell upon his tragedy, he altered it by the light the stage had given him; above all, he heightened and improved the heroine, he touched her and retouched her with the colors of Oldfield — and this done, with trembling hands, he wrapped it in brown paper, addressed it, and left it at her own house, and no sooner had Susan's hand touched it, than he fled like a guilty thing.

You see it was his first love — and she he loved seemed more than mortal to him.

And now came a reaction. Days and days rolled by, and no more adventures came, no means of making acquaintance with one so high above his reach.

He was still at the stage-door, but she did not seem to recognize him, and he dared not recall himself to her recollection. His organization was delicate — he began to fret and lose his sleep, and at last his pallor and listlessness attracted the not very keen eye of Timothy Bateman. Mr. Bateman asked him twenty times if anything was the matter — twenty times he answered, "No!" At last, good, worthy, commonplace Bateman, after dinner and deep thought, said one day, "Alexander, I've found out what it is." Alexander started.

"Money melts in London; yours is gone quicker than you thought it would; — my poor lad, don't you fret. I've got twenty pounds to spare, here 'tis. Your father will never know. I've been young as well as you." Alexander grasped the good old fellow's hand and

pressed it to his heart. He never looked at the note, but he looked, half tenderly, half wildly, into the old man's eyes.

Bateman read this look aright — "Ay, out with it, young man," he cried; "never keep a grief locked up in your heart, whilst you have a friend that will listen to it, that is an old man's advice."

On this poor Alexander's story gushed forth. He told Bateman the facts I have told you, only his soul, and all the feelings he had gone through, gushed from his heart of hearts. They sat till one in the morning, and often as the young heart laid bare its enthusiasm, its youth, its anguish, the dry old lawyer found out there was a soft bit left in his own, that sent the woman to the door of his eyes, for Alexander told his story differently, and I think on the whole better, than I do. I will just indicate *one* difference between us two as narrators — he told it like blood and fire, I tell it like criticism and ice, and be hanged to me.

Perhaps, had Alexander told the tale as I do, Bateman, man of the world, would have sneered at him, or sternly advised him to quit this folly and whim; but as it was, Bateman was touched, and mingled pity with good, gentle, but firm advice, and poor Alexander was grateful. The poet revered the commonplace good man, as a poet ought, and humbly prayed him to save him by his wisdom. He owned that he was mad, — that he was indulging a hopeless passion, that he knew the great tragedian, courted by the noble and rich of the land, would never condescend even to an acquaintance with him. And, bursting into a passion of tears, "Oh! good Mr. Bateman," cried he, "the most unfortunate hour of my life was that in which I first saw her, for she will be my death, for she will never permit me to live for her, and without her life is intolerable to me."

This last feature decided Timothy Bateman; the next morning he wrote to Nathan Oldworthy a full account of all. "Come up, and take him home again for heaven's sake."

It fell like a thunderbolt on the poor father, but he moved promptly; in two hours he was on the road to London.

Arrived there, he straight invaded Alexander. The poet, luckily for himself, was not at home. He then went to Bateman; he was in a towering passion.

The old puritanical leaven was scotched, but not killed, in Coventry.

In a general way, Nathan looked on love as no worse than one of the Evil One's many snares, to divert youth from law — but love of an actress! If you had asked Coventry whether the playhouse or the public-house ruins the manners, morality, and intellect of England, Coventry was capable of answering: "The playhouse." He raged against the fool and the jade, as he succinctly, and not inaptly, described a dramatic poet and an actress.

His friend endeavored to stop the current of his wrath, in vain: the attempt only diverted its larger current from Alexander to the siren who had fascinated him. In vain Bateman assured him that affairs had proceeded to no length between the parties: the other snubbed him, called him a fool, that knew nothing of the world, and assured him that if anything came of it, she should have nothing from the Oldworthys, but thirty pence per week, the parish allowance (Nathan's ideas of love were as primitive as Alexander's were poetic), and lastly, bouncing up, he announced that he was going to see the hussy, and force her to give up her Delilah designs.

At this, poor Bateman was in dismay; he represented to this mad bull, that Mrs. Oldfield was "on the windy

side of the law," that there were no proofs she had done anything more than every woman would do, if she was clever enough; viz., turn every man's head; he next reminded him of her importance, and implored him at least to be prudent. "My dear friend," said he, "there are at least a score of gentlemen in this town, who would pass their swords through an old attorney, as they would through a mad dog, only to have a smile or a compliment from this lady."

This last argument was ill chosen. The old Puritan was game to the backbone; he flung Mrs. Oldfield's champions a grim grin of defiance, and marched out to invade that lady, and save his offspring.

Now, the said Mrs. Oldfield, wishing to be very quiet, because she was preparing to play for the championship of the stage, and was studying Statira, had given her footman orders to admit no living soul, upon any pretence.

Oldworthy, who had heard in Coventry that people in London are always at home if their servants say they are out, pushed past the man; the man followed him remonstrating. When they reached the ante-chamber, he thought it was time to do more, so he laid his hand on the intruder's collar — then ensued a short but very brisk scuffle; the ladies heard, to their dismay, a sound as of a footman falling from the top to the bottom of a staircase: and the next moment, in jack-boots splashed with travel, an immense hat of a fashion long gone by, his dark cheek flushed with anger, and his eyes shooting sombre lightning from under their thick brows, Nathan Oldworthy strode like wild-fire into the room.

Susan screamed, and Anne turned pale, but, recovering herself, she said, with a wonderful show of spirit, "How dare you intrude on me? — Keep close to me, stupid!" was her trembling aside to Susan.

"I'm used to enter people's houses, whether they will or not," was the gruff reply.

"Your business, sir?" said Mrs. Oldfield, with affected calmness.

"It is not fit for that child to hear," was the answer.

Anne Oldfield was wonderfully intelligent, and even in this remark, she saw the man, if a barbarian, was not a ruffian. She looked towards Susan.

Susan, interpreting her look, declined to leave her alone "with, with" —

"A brute, I suppose," said Nathan, coarsely.

The artist measured the man with her eye.

"He who feels himself a brute, is on the way to be a man," said she, with genuine dignity; so saying, she dismissed Susan with a gesture.

"You are the play-acting woman, aren't you?" said he.

"I am the tragedian, sir," replied she, "whose time is precious."

"I'll lose no time — I'm an attorney, — the first in Coventry. I'm Nathan Oldworthy. My son's education has been given him under my own eye. I taught him the customs of the country, and the civil law. He is to be a sergeant-at-law, and a sergeant-at-law he shall be."

"I consent for one," said Oldfield, demurely.

"And then we can play into one another's hands, as should be."

"I have no opposition to offer to this pretty little scheme of the Old Somethings — father and son."

"Oldworthys! no opposition! when he hasn't been once to Westminster, and every night to the play-house."

"Oh!" said the lady, "I see! the old story."

"The very day the poor boy came here," resumed

Nathan, "there was a tragedy play; so because a woman sighed and burned for sport, the fool goes home and sighs and burns in earnest, can't eat his victuals, flings away his prospects, and thinks of nothing but this Nance Oldfield."

He uttered this appellation with rough contempt; and had the actress been a little one, this descent to Nance Oldfield would have mortified or enraged her. But its effect on the great Oldfield was different, and somewhat singular; she opened her lovely eyes on him.

"Nance Oldfield!" cried she. "Oh, sir, nobody has called me that name since I left my little native town."

"Haven't they, though?" said the rough customer more gently, responding to her heavenly tones, rather than to the sentiment, which he in no degree comprehended.

"No!" said Oldfield, with an ill-used Æolian-harp tone.

Here the attorney began to suspect she was diverting him from the point, and, with a curl of the lip, and a fine masculine contempt for all subterfuges — not on sheepskin, — "You had better say you do not know all this," cried he.

"Not I," was the reply. "My good sir, your son has left you to confide to me the secret of his attachment: you have discharged the commission, Sir Pandarus of Troy," added she, with a world of malicious fun in her jewel-like eye.

"Nathan Oldworthy of Coventry, I tell ye!" put in the angry sire.

"And it is now my duty to put some questions to you," resumed the actress. "Is your son handsome?" said she, in a sly half whisper.

"Is not he?" answered gaunt simplicity, "and well built too — he is like me, they say."

SNATCHED THE LETTER RUDELY FROM HER.

"There is a point on which I am very particular. — Has he nice teeth? — upon your honor, now."

"White as milk, ma'am; and a smile that warms your heart up; fresh color; — there's not such a lad in Coventry." Here the old boy caught sight of a certain poetical epistle which, if you remember, was in Mrs. Oldfield's hands.

"And pray, madam," said he with smooth craft, "does Alexander Oldworthy never write to you?"

"Never," was her answer.

"She says never!" thundered Nathan, "and there is his letter in her very hand, — a superb handwriting; what a waste of talent to write to you with it, instead of engrossing; what does the fool say?" and he snatched the letter rudely from her, and read out poor Alexander, with the lungs of a Stentor.

Gracious me! if I was puzzled to show the reader how Susan read the Mannering prose, how on earth shall I make him hear and see Oldworthy *père* read Oldworthy *fils* his rhymes; but I will attempt a faint adumbration, wherein glorious Apollo, from on high, befriend us!

"My soul hangs trembling — (full stop.) On that magic voice, grieves with your woe — (full stop.) Exults when you rejoice. A golden chain — (here he cast a look of perplexity.) I feel but cannot see — (here he began to suspect Alexander of insanity.) Binds earth to heaven — (of impiety, ditto.) It ties my heart *to* thee like a sunflower." And now the reader wore the ill-used look of one who had been betrayed into a labyrinth of unmeaning syllables; but at this juncture, thanks to his sire, Alexander Oldworthy began to excite Mrs. Oldfield's interest.

"And that poetry is his!" said the actress.

"Poetry? no! How could my son write poetry? I'll

be hanged if 'tisn't though, for all the lines begin with a capital letter."

Oldfield took the paper from him. "Listen," said she, and with a heavenly cadence and expression, she spoke the lines thus: —

> 'My soul hangs trembling on that magic voice,
> Grieves with your woe, exults when you rejoice;
> A golden chain I feel, but cannot see,
> Binds earth to heaven — it ties my heart to thee,
> Like a sunflower,' etc. —

"What do you call that, eh?"

"Why, honey dropping from the comb," said the astounded lawyer, to whom the art of speech was entirely unknown until that moment, as it is to millions of the human race.

"It is honey dropping from the comb," repeated Nathan. "I see, he has been and bought it ready-made, and it has cost him a pretty penny, no doubt. So, now his money's going to the dogs, too."

"And these sentiments, these accents of poetry and truth, that have reached my heart, this daily homage that would flatter a queen, do I owe it to your son? Oh! sir."

"Good gracious heavens!" roared the terrified father; "don't *you* go and fall in love with *him;* and, now I think on't, that is what I have been working for ever since I came here. Cut it short. I came for my son, and I will have him back, if you please. Where is he?"

"How can I know?" said the lady, pettishly.

"Why, he follows you everywhere."

"Except here, where he never will follow me, unless his father teaches him housebreaking under the head of civil law."

At this sudden thrust, Oldworthy blushed. "Well,

ma'am!" stammered he, "I was a little precipitate; but, my good lady, pray tell me, when did you last see him?"

"I never saw him at all, which I regret," added she, satirically; "because you say he resembles his father." Nathan was a particular ugly dog.

"She is very polite," thought Nathan. "But," objected he, "you must have learned from his letters" —

"That they are not signed!" said she, handing the poetical epistle to him, with great significance.

Mr. Nathan Oldworthy began now to doubt whether he was *sur le bon terrain* in his present proceedings; and the error in which he had detected himself made him suddenly suspect his judgment and general report on another head. "What an extraordinary thing!" said he, bluntly. "Perhaps you are an honest woman, after all, ma'am!"

"Sir!" said Oldfield, with a most tragic air.

"I ask your pardon, ma'am! I ask your pardon!" cried the other, terrified by the royal pronunciation of this monosyllable. "Country manners, ma'am! that is all! We do speak so straightforward down in Coventry."

"Yes! but if you speak so straightforward here, you will be sent to Coventry."

"I'll take care not, madam! I'll take great care not!" said the other, hastily. Then he paused — a light rose gradually to his eye. "Sent to Coventry! ha! haw! ho! But, madam, this love will be his ruin: it will rob him of his profession which he detests, and of a rich heiress whom he can't abide. Since I came here I think better of play-actors; but, consider, madam, we don't like our blood to come down in the world!"

"It *would* be cruel to lower an attorney," replied the play-actress, looking him demurely in the face.

"You are considerate, madam!" replied he gratefully. He added with manly compunction, "More so, I fear, than I have deserved."

"*Mais! il me désarme, cet homme!*" cried the sprightly Oldfield, ready to scream with laughter.

"Are you speaking to me, ma'am?" said Nathan severely.

"No, that was an 'aside.' Go on, my good soul!"

"Then forgive the trouble, the agitation, of a father: his career, his happiness, is in danger."

"Now, why did you not begin with that? it would have saved your time and mine. Favor me with your attention, sir, for a moment," said the fine lady with grave courtesy.

"I will, madam," said the other, respectfully.

"Mr. Oldworthy, first you are to observe, that I have by the constitution of these realms as much right to fall in love with your son, or even with yourself, as he or you have to do with me."

"So you have: I never thought of that; but don't ye do it, for heaven's sake, if 'tisn't done already."

"But I should have been inclined, even before your arrival, to waive that right out of regard for my own interest and reputation, especially the former: and now you have won my heart, and I enter into your feelings, and place myself at your service."

"You are very good, madam! Now why do they go and run play-actors down so?"

"You are aware, sir, that we play-actors have not an idea of our own in our skulls: our art is to execute beautifully the ideas of those who think: now, you are a man of business; you will therefore be pleased to give me your instructions, and you shall see those instructions executed better than they are down in Coventry. You want me to prevent your son from loving me. I consent. Tell me how to do it."

"Madam!" said Nathan, "you have put your finger on the very point. What a lawyer you would have made! Madam, I thank you! Very well, then you must — but, no, that will make him worse perhaps. And again, you can't leave off playing, *can* you? because that is your business, you know — dear me. Ah! I'll tell you how to bring it about. Let me see — no! — yes! — no! drat it!"

"Your instructions are not sufficiently clear, sir," suggested Mrs. Oldfield.

"Well, madam, it is not so easy as I thought, and I don't see what instructions I am to give you, until — until" —

"Until I tell you what to tell me. That's fair. Well, give me a day to think. I am so busy now. I must play my best to-night."

"But he'll be there," said Nathan, in dismay; "you'll play your best: you'll burn him to a cinder: I'll go to him." He ran to the window, informing his companion that, for the first time in his life, he was going to take a coach. But he had no sooner arrived at the window, than he made a sudden point, and beckoned the lady to him, without removing his eyes from some object on which he glared down with a most singular expression of countenance. She came to his side. He directed her eyes to the object. "Look there, ma'am; look there!" She peeped, and standing by a hosier's shop, at the corner of the street, she descried a young man engaged as follows: his hat was in his hand, and on the hat was a little piece of paper. He was alternately writing on this, and looking upward for inspiration.

"Is that he?" whispered Mrs. Oldfield.

"Yes, that's your man — bareheaded, looking up into the sky, and doesn't see how it rains."

"But he is very handsome, Mr. Oldworthy, and you said he was like — hem! yes, he is very handsome."

"Isn't he, madam?"

He was handsome — his rich chestnut curls flowed down his neck in masses; his face was oval; his eyes full of color and sentiment; and in him the purple light of youth was brightened by the electric light of expression and charming sensibility.

The strangely assorted pair in our scene held on by one another the better to inspect the young poet, who little thought what a pair of critics were in store for him.

"What a bright, intelligent look the silly goose has!" said the actress.

"Hasn't he? the dear — idiot!" said the parent.

"Is he waiting for you, sir?" said she, with affected simplicity.

"No," replied he with real; "it's you he is waiting for."

Alexander began to walk slowly past the house, looking up to heaven every now and then for inspiration, and then looking down and scribbling a bit, like a hen drinking, you know: and thus occupied, he stalked to and fro, passing and repassing beneath the criticising eyes — at sight of which pageant a father's fingers began to work, and, "Madam," said he, with a calmness too marked to be genuine, "do let me fling one little — chair at his silly head."

"No, indeed."

"A pillow, then?"

"O Lud, no! You don't know these boys, sir! he would take that as an overture of affection from the house. Stay, will you obey me, or will you not?"

"Of course I will! how can I help?" and he grinned with horrible amiability.

"Then I will cure your son."

"You will, you promise me?"

"On the honor of — a play-actor!" and she offered him, with a world of grace, the loveliest hand going at that era.

"Of an angel, I think," said the subjugated barbarian.

Mrs. Oldfield then gave him a short sketch of the idea that had occurred to her. "Your son, sir," said she, "is in love by the road of imagination and taste — he has seen upon the stage a being more like a poet's dream than any young woman down in Coventry, and he overrates her; I will contrive that in ten minutes he shall underrate her. I will also find means to wound his vanity, which is inordinate in all his sex, and gigantic in the versifying part of it — and then, sir, I promise that your son's love, so fresh, so fiery, so lofty, so humble, will either turn to hatred or contempt, or else quietly evaporate like a mist, and vanish like a morning dream. Ah!" — and she could not help sighing a little.

Susan was then called, and directed to show Mr. Nathan Oldworthy out the back way, that he might avoid the encounter of his son. The said Nathan accordingly marched slap away in four great strides; but the next moment the door burst open, and he returned in four more — he took up a position opposite his fair entertainer, and, with much gravity, executed a solemn but marvellously grotesque bow intended to express gratitude and civility; this done, he recovered body, and strode away again slap-dash.

Spirits like Alexander's are greatly depressed and greatly elevated without proportionate change in the external causes of joy and grief. It is theirs to view the same set of facts rose-color one day, lurid another. Two days ago Alexander had been in despondence; to-day hope was in the ascendant, and his destiny appeared to

him all bathed in sunshine. He was rich in indistinct but gay hopes; these hopes had whispered to him, that, after all, an alliance between a dramatic poet and a tragedian was a natural one — that, perhaps, on reflection, she he loved might not think it so very imprudent. He felt convinced she had read "Berenice" — she would see the alterations in the heroine's part, and that love had dictated them. She would find there was one being that comprehended her. That and his verses would surely plead his cause. Then he loved her so — who could love her as he did? Some day she would feel that no heart could love her so; and then he would say to her, "I am truth and nature; you are beauty and music — united, we should conquer the world, and be the world to one another!" Poor boy!

He was walking and dreaming thus beneath her window, when his ear caught the sound of that window opening; he instantly cowered against the wall, hoping this happy day to see the form he loved, himself unseen, when, to his immeasurable surprise, a beautiful girl put her head out of the window, and called softly to him. He took no notice, because it was inaudible. She had to repeat the call before he could realize his good-fortune; the signal, however, was unmistakable, and soon after the door opened, and there was pretty Susan blushing. Alexander ran to her; she opened the door wider; he entered, believing in magic for the first time. Susan took him up-stairs — he said nothing — he could not — she did not speak, because she thought he ought to. At last they reached a richly-furnished room, where Statira's dress lay upon a chair, and a theatrical diadem upon a table. Alexander's heart leaped at sight of these; he knew then where he was; he turned hot and cold, and trembled violently. The first word Susan said did not calm his agitation. "There is a lady here," said she, "who has something to say to you."

Now, it must be remembered, that Susan considered Alexander her undoubted property, and when she was told to introduce him she could not help thinking how kind it was of her cousin to take her part, and bring to the point a young gentleman, who, charming in other respects, was sadly deficient in audacity. "Sit down," said Susan, smiling.

Oh, no! he could not sit down here! Susan pitied his timidity, and his discomposure, and to put both him and herself out of pain the sooner, she left him and went to announce his presence to her cousin and guardian as she now considered her.

Alexander was left alone to all appearance; in reality, he was in a crowd — a crowd of "thick-coming fancies." He was to breathe the same air as her, to be by her side, whom the world adored at a distance; he was to see her burst on him like the sun, and to feel more strongly than ever how far his verse fell short of the goddess who inspired it; he half wished to retreat from his too great happiness. Suddenly a rustle in the apartment awakened him from his rich reverie; he looked up, and there was a lady with her eyes fixed on him.

The lady had on what might, without politeness, but with truth, be called a dressing-gown; it was ostentatiously large everywhere, especially at the waist. The lady's hair, or what seemed her hair, was rough, and ill done up, and a great cap of flaunty design surmounted her head. On her feet were old slippers.

"Good-day, sir!" said she, dryly.

Alexander bowed. "Madam! I await Mrs. Oldfield."

"*Tête-à-tête* with your Muse." Alexander's poetical works were in her hand.

"She is my Muse, madam!" replied he; "she alone. Are you not proud of her, madam? for I see by your likeness that you are some relation."

The lady burst out laughing: "That's a compliment to my theatrical talent; I am the party."

"You Mrs. Oldfield! the great Mrs. Oldfield!"

"Why not? What! you come from the country, I suppose, and think we are to be always on stilts, when we are not paid for it. You look as if you were afraid of me."

"Oh, no, madam! and, as you say, it shows how great your talent is."

"You want to speak to me, my lad."

Alexander blushed to the temples. "Yes, madam," faltered he, "you have divined my ambition. I have been presumptuous — but I saw you on the tragic scene — the admiration you inspired — I fear I have importuned you — but my hope, my irresistible desire" —

"There, I know what you mean," said she with an affectation of vulgar good-nature, "you want an order for the pit."

"I want an order for the pit?" gasped Alexander, faintly.

"Well, ain't I going to give you one," answered she, as sharp as a needle; "but mind, you must" — here she imitated vehement applause.

"O madam! I need no such injunction," cried Alexander, "each of your achievements on the stage seems to me greater than the last." Then, trembling, blushing, and eloquent as fire, he poured out his admiration of her, and her great art: "The others are all puppets, played by rule, around you, the queen of speech and poetry; your pathos is so true, your sensibility so profound; yours are real tears; you lead our sorrow in person; you fuse your soul into those great characters, and art becomes nature: you are the thing you seem, and it is plain each lofty emotion passes through that princely heart on its way to those golden lips."

Oldfield, with all her self-command, could not quite resist the eloquence of the heart and brain. She, too, now blushed a little, and her lovely bosom heaved slowly, but high, as the poet poured the music of his praise into her ears; then she stole a look at him, from under her long lashes, and sipped his beauty and his freshness. She could not help looking at this forbidden fruit. As she looked, she did feel how hard, how cruel it was, that she was not to be allowed to play with this young, fresh heart; to see it throb with hopes and fears, and love, jealousy, anguish, joy, and finally to break it, and fling the pieces to the devil, but she was a singular character — she was the concentrated essence of female in all points, except one: she was a woman of her word, or, as some brutes would say, no woman at all in matters of good faith. She stood pledged to the attorney, and therefore, recovering herself, she took up Alexander thus: —

"No, thank you; emotions pass through my, what's the name — well, you *are* green — you don't come from the country — you are from Wales. I must enlighten you; sit down; sit down, I tell you. The tears, my boy, are as real as the rest — as the sky, and that's pasteboard — as the sun, and he is three candles smirking upon all nature, which is canvas — they are as real as ourselves, the tragedy queens, with our cries, our sighs, and our sobs, all measured out to us by the five-foot rule. Reality, young gentleman, *that* begins when the curtain falls, and we wipe off our profound sensibility along with our rouge, our whiting, and our beauty spots."

"Impossible!" cried the poet, "those tears, those dew-drops on the tree of poetry!"

He was requested not to make her "die of laughing" with his tears; his common-sense was appealed to.

"Now, my good soul, if I was to vex myself night after night, for Clytemnestra & Co., don't you see that I should not hold together long? No, thank you! I've got 'Nance Oldfield' to take care of, and what's Hecuba to her? For my part," continued this frank lady, "I don't understand half the authors give us to say."

"Oh, yes, you do! you write upon our eyes and ears more than half of all the author gains credit for — the noblest sentiments gain more from your tongue than the pen, great as it is, could ever fling upon paper — I am unworthy to be your companion!"

"Nonsense! do you really think I am like those black parrots of tragedy? — fine company I should be! — he, he! — No! we are like other women, you can court us without getting a dagger stuck into you." She then informed him that the representatives of Desdemona, Belvidera, Cordelia, and Virgin Purity in general, had all as many beaux as they could lay their hands on — that she had twenty at the present moment; that he could join that small but select band, if he chose, secure of this, that whether a fortunate or unfortunate lover, there would be companions of his fate — then suddenly interrupting her disclosures, she offered him a snuff-box, and said, dryly, "D'ye snuff?"

Alexander's eye dilated with horror. She observed him, and explained, "There's no doing without it, in our business: we get so tired!" here she yawned as only actresses yawn, — like one going out of the world in four pieces: "We get so tired of the whole concern. This is the real source of our inspiration," said she, taking a pinch, "or how should we ever rise to the poet's level, and launch all those awful execrations they love so! as, for instance — Ackishoo! — God bless you!"

Alexander groaned aloud.

"Poor boy!" thought his tormentor, "how he takes it to heart!"

"Why, ma'am, a fall from heaven to earth is a considerable descent."

"You look pale, my child," resumed the tormentor. "No breakfast, perhaps. I'd offer you some in a minute, but the fact is, I look to every penny; when the rainy day comes I shall be ready," and she brought both hands down upon her knees, in a way the imitated vulgarity of which would have made any one scream with laughter that had seen her game; but it was all genuine to our poor poet, and crushed him.

Having opened this vein of self-depreciation, she proceeded to work it. She poked him with one finger, and, looking slyly with half-shut eye at him, she announced herself the authoress of some very curious calculations, the object of which was to discover by comparing the week's salary with the lines in the night's performance, the exact value of poetical passages, generally supposed to be invaluable. "Listen," said she, —

"'Come! come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here!'

They are worth just tenpence."

Alexander, who had been raised by the poetry, was depressed by its arithmetic.

She recommenced, —

"'That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry hold! hold! — Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!'"

Making the point on "Great Glamis," at Macbeth's entrance, not on "hold," which is done nowadays, and is too cruel silly.

"Ah! you are yourself again," cried the poet.

"Yes; I am myself again!" was the dry answer: "those bring me in 2*s.* 8*d.* every time."

And this was the being he had adored! He had invested this creature with his own prismatic hues, and taken her for a rainbow.

Mrs. Oldfield told afterwards that she felt herself cutting his heart away from her at every sentence. "But it was to be done." She continued, "So now you know my trade, tell me, what is yours?"

"One I used to despise — an advocate."

"Ah! a little long robe; they are actors too, only bad ones; but tell me," said she, with a silly, coquettish manner, borrowed from the comedy of the day, "what do you want of me? You have not followed me so perseveringly for nothing! Speak, what have you to tell me?"

Alexander blushed: he had no longer the stimulus to tell her all he had felt and hoped; he hesitated and stammered: at last he bethought him of his tragedy; so he said, "I sent you a tragedy, madam."

"What! do they do that in Warwickshire?"

"Yes, madam; I composed it by stealth in my father's office."

Oldfield smiled.

Alexander continued, "It is called from the heroine of the play, 'Berenice.'"

"Berenice!" cried the actress, with a start.

Now this tragedy had pleased Mrs. Oldfield more than any manuscript she had seen these three years; but, above all, the part of Berenice had charmed her: it fitted her like a glove, as she poetically expressed herself; it was written in Alexander's copper-plate hand, so she had not identified it with the author of her diurnal verses.

"Berenice! is it possible?"

"A queen, madam, who, captured by the Romans" —

"What, sir! you the author of that work?" said she, with sudden respect.

"Favor me with your opinion," said the sanguine poet.

Tremble, Nathan! You had only her womanly weakness to dread hitherto; but now the jade's interest is against you. Strange to say, her promise carried the day: she was true as steel to Nathan, and remorseless as steel to Alexander. She saw at once that no middle course was now tenable; so she turned on the poor poet, not without secret regret, and with a voice of ice she said, "The town is tired of Romans, my good sir: you had better go into Tartary. Besides," added she, jumping at the commonplaces of dramatic censure, "your fable does not march, your language wants fire: let me give you a word of advice, or rather a line of advice, 'Plead, Alexander, plead, and rhyme no more!'" She then added hastily, in a very different tone and manner, "Forgive me, my poor child; you will make more money and be more respected."

The reason of this rapid change of manner was this — when we have given dreadful pain, more pain than we calculated on, and see it, we are apt to try and qualify it with a little weak, empty good-nature. Now at her verdict and her witty line, Alexander had turned literally as pale as ashes. The drop of oil she poured on the deadly wounds she had given was no comfort to him; he rose, he tried to speak to her, but his lip trembled so violently, he could not articulate; at last he gasped out, "Thank you for undeceiving me — you have taught me your own v-value; and m-mine. Forgive me the time I have made you waste upon a d-dunce." And then, in spite of all he could do, the tears forced themselves through the poor boy's eyes; and casting one look of shame and half reproach upon her, he put his hand to his brow, and went disconsolately from the room and out of the house.

Poor fellow! she had made him ten years older than when, ten minutes before, he entered that room, all faith, and poetry, and love.

Slowly and disconsolately he dragged his heavy steps and a heavy heart home. His father followed, and entered his small apartment without ceremony. Nathan found his son sitting with his eyes fixed on the ground. In a few abrupt words he told him he knew all about his amorous folly, and had come up to cure it.

"It is cured," said Alexander; "she has cured me herself."

"Then she is an honest woman," cried Nathan. "So now, since that nonsense is over, take my arm, and we will go down to Westminster."

"Yes, father."

They went to Westminster; they entered a court of law, and were so fortunate as to hear an interesting trial. Counsel for the plaintiff was just opening a crim. con. case.

The advocate dwelt upon the sacred feelings outraged by the seducer, on the irremediable gap that had been made in a house, and in a human heart; the pitiable doubt that had been cast over those sacred parental affections which were all that now remained to the bereaved husband. He painted the empty chamber, the vacant place by the hearth, and the father dagger-struck by little voices lisping, "Papa, where is mamma gone?" and all that sort of thing. His speech was rich in topic and point, and as for emphasis, it was all emphasis. He concluded in this wise: "Such injuries as these can never be compensated by money; it is ridiculous to talk of money where a man has been laid desolate, and, therefore, I hope, gentlemen of the jury, you will give my unfortunate client three thousand pounds damages at the very least!"

At each point the orator made, Nathan nudged Alexander, as if to say, "That is how you must do it some day."

As they returned homewards attorney asked poet how he had been charmed by Mr. Eitherside's eloquence.

"Eloquence?" said Alexander, waking from his reverie. "I heard no eloquence."

"No eloquence! why, he worked the defendant like a man beating a carpet."

Nathan recapitulated Mr. Eitherside's points.

"Well, father," was the languid reply, "this shows me that people who would speak about the heart should speak from the heart. I heard something like a terrier dog barking, that is all I remember."

"A terrier dog! one of the first counsel in the land; but there, you come to your dinner. I won't be in a passion with you, if I can help, because — you'll be better after dinner."

Nathan's satisfaction at his son's sudden cure was soon damped. Alexander was not better after dinner; to be sure, this might have been owing to his having eaten none; he could not eat, and never volunteered a word; only when spoken to three times, he shook himself and answered with a visible effort, and then nestled into silence again. The next and following days matters were worse. Spite of all Nathan could do to move him, he sank into a cold, listless melancholy. About five o'clock (play-time) he used to be very restless and nervous for a little while, and then relapse into stone. And now Nathan began to ask himself what the actress had done to his son during that short interview between them. He began greatly to doubt the wonderful cure, or rather to fear that the first poison had been attacked by a stronger in the way of antidote, which had left his son in worse case than before.

Hitherto he had thought it wisest to avoid the subject, and silently expel the boy's folly by taking him and shaking him, and keeping him from thinking of it. But now one evening, as he looked at Alexander's pallid, listless countenance, this anxiety got the better of his plan, and he could not help facing the obnoxious topic.

After a vain attempt or two to interest the poet in other matters, he suddenly burst out, "What is the matter, Alexander? What has she done to you now?"

Alexander winced.

"Tell me, my boy," said Nathan, more gently.

Alexander *éclata.*

"She has deceived me. She has robbed my heart of all its wealth. Oh! I would rather have gone on believing her all that is great and good, though inaccessible to me. But to find my divinity a mean heartless slattern. To have poured all my treasures away forever upon an unworthy object. O father, I do not grieve so much that she is worthless, but that I thought her worthy. To me she was the jewel of the earth. — I know her now for a vile counterfeit, and I have wasted my affections on this creature, and now I have none left for any worthy object; scarcely for my father. See my conduct to you all this week. Heaven forgive me — and you forgive me, sir. I feel I am no son to you. I am lost! I am lost!"

"Alexander, don't be a fool," roared Nathan, "get up off your knees, or I'll kee—kee—kick you into the fi—fire!" gulped he; "that is right — that's a dear boy: now tell me what has the poor lady done? I can't think she is such a very bad one."

"She has robbed herself and me of the tints with which I had invested her, and shown herself to me in her true colors."

"Why, you mustn't tell me she paints her face, without 'tis with cold water."

"Oh, no! not that, but off the stage she is a mean, vulgar, bad woman."

"I can't think that of her, Alexander."

"Father, I have no words to tell you her vulgarity, her avarice, her stupidity — as for her beauty, it is all paint and artifice: father, I saw her this day se'nnight in her own house; she is vulgar, and dirty, and almost ugly."

"Oh, you deceitful young rascal, you know she is beautiful as an angel!"

"Isn't she, sir! — ah! you have only seen her on the stage."

"I see her on the stage! What, do you tell me I go to the playhouse! I never was in a playhouse in my life."

"Then how do you know she is beautiful? Where have you seen her, if not on the stage?"

Mr. Oldworthy senior hesitated. He did not choose his son to know he had visited the play-actress, and enlisted her in his cause.

Alexander saw his hesitation, and misinterpreted it ludicrously.

"Ah, father," cried he, "do not be ashamed of it."

"I am not — ashamed of what?"

"Would I were worthy of all this affection!"

"What affection?"

"That you have for the unfortunate."

"I have no affection for the unfortunate, it's always their own fault."

"If you knew how I honor you for this, you would not deny or be ashamed of it."

"Of what? Are we talking riddles?"

"Do not attempt to disguise what gives you a fresh title to my gratitude — it was curiosity to see my destroyer drew you thither. Ah, it must have been the

day before yesterday. I remember you disappeared after dinner. Well, father," continued Alexander, with a sad, sweet, melancholy accent, "you saw her play 'Monimia' that night, and, having seen her, you can forgive my infatuation."

"No! I can't forgive your infatuation, obstinate toad! that will tell me I have been to the playhouse — to the devil's own shop-parlor that is."

"You have seen her — you call her beautiful; therefore it is clear you have seen her at the theatre, for at home she is anything but beautiful, or an angel."

"Alexander, you will put me in a passion; but I won't be put in a passion." So saying, the old gentleman, who was in a passion, marched slap out of the house into the moonlight, and cooled himself therein.

On his return he found his son sitting in a sort of collapse by the fire, and all his endeavors to draw him from brooding over his own misery proved unavailing. The next day he was worse, if possible; and when playtime had come and gone, and Nathan was in the middle of a long law-case that he was relating for his son's amusement, Alexander, who had not spoken for hours, quietly asked Nathan what he thought about suicide, and whether it was injudicious to die when hope was dead and life withered forever. Nathan gave a short, severe answer to this query; but it troubled him.

He began to be frightened: he consulted Bateman. Bateman was equally puzzled; but at last the latter hit upon an idea. "Go to the actress again," said he; "it seems she can do anything with him. She made him love her — she made him hate her; ask her to make him to do something between the two."

"Why, you old fool!" was the civil retort, "you are as mad as he is. No! she almost bewitched me, for as old as I am; and I won't go near her again."

But Alexander got worse and worse. He drooped like a tender flower. He had lost appetite and sleep; and without them the body soon gives way.

His grief was of the imagination. But the distinction muddle-heads draw between real and imaginary griefs is imaginary. Whatever robs a human unit of rest, nourishment, and life, is as real to him as anything but eternity is real.

The old men saw a subtle disorder creeping over the young man. It was incomprehensible to them; and after ridiculing it awhile, they began to be more frightened at it than if they had comprehended it.

At last, one morning, a new phase presented itself. A great desire for solitude consumed our poor poet. All human beings were distasteful to him, and, his mind being in a diseased state, Nathan and Timothy bored him like red-hot gimlets — the truth must be told. Well, this particular morning, they would not let him alone — and he so wanted just to be left in peace — and partly from nervousness, partly from irritation, partly from misery, the poet lost all self-command, and, I am sorry to say, cursed and swore and vowed he would kill himself; and called his friends his tormentors, and wept and raved and cursed the hour he was born. And at the end of this most unbecoming tirade he was for dashing out of the house, but his father caught him by the collar and whirled him back into his room, and locked him into it. Alexander fell into a chair and buried his face in his hands: presently he heard something that made him feel how selfish his grief had been. He heard a deep sigh just outside the door, and then a heavy step went down the stair.

"Father!" cried he, "forgive me! Oh, forgive me!"

It was too late. All who give a parent pain repent; but how often it is too late.

The poor old man was gone, as unhappy as his son, and with more solid reason. He went into the street without knowing what he should do or where he should go.

It happened at this moment that Bateman's advice came into his head. He was less disposed to scout it now.

"It can do no harm," thought he, "and I am quite at a loss. She has a good heart, I think, and at all events she seems to know how to work on him, and I don't. I'll risk it."

So, hanging his head, and with no very good-will, he slowly wended his way towards Mrs. Oldfield's house.

When Alexander left Mrs. Oldfield, that lady took off her vulgar cap and the old wig with which she had disguised her lovely head, and, throwing herself into a chair, laughed at the piece of comedy she had played off on our poor poet.

Her laugh, however, was not sincere; it soon died away into something more like a sigh.

The next morning there was no letter in verse, and she missed it. She had become used to them, and was vexed to think she had put an end to them. On returning from the theatre she looked from her carriage to see if he was standing as usual by the stage-door. No, he was not there; no more letters — no more Alexander. She felt sorry she had lost so genuine an admirer; and the moment the sense of his loss touched herself she began to pity him, and think what a shame it was to deceive him so.

"I could have liked him better than all the rest," said she.

But this lady's profession is one unfavorable to the growth of regrets, or of affection for any object not in sight. She had to rehearse from ten till one, then to

come home, then to lay out her clothes for the theatre, then to dine, then to study, then to go to the theatre, then to dress, then to act with all the intoxications of genius, light, multitude, and applause; then to undress, sup, etc., and all this time she was constantly flattered and courted by dozens of beaux and wits. Had she been capable of a deep attachment, it could not have monopolized her as Alexander's did him. However, she did thus much for our poor poet: when she found she had succeeded in banishing him she went into her tantrums, and snapped at and scratched everybody else that was kind to her. She also often invited Susan to speak of him, and after awhile snubbed her and forbade the topic.

To-day, then, as Mrs. Oldfield sat studying "The Rival Queens," suddenly she heard a sob, and there was Susan, with the tears quietly and without effort streaming from her eyes, like the water running through a lock gate. Susan had just returned from a walk.

"What have you done?" whined Susan. "I have just met him, and he said to me, 'Ah, madam!' he always calls me madam, and he has lost his beautiful color — he is miserable — and I am miserable."

"Well!" snapped Anne, "and am I not miserable too! why, Susan," cried she, for a glimmer of light burst on her, "surely you are not such a goose as to fancy yourself in love with my Alexander."

My Alexander — good! She has declined him for herself, but she will not let you have him any the more for *that* — other women!

"Your Alexander! No! I am too fond of my own. Here's your one's book," and Susan thrust a duodecimo towards her cousin.

"My one's book," said Mrs. Oldfield, with a mystified air.

"Yes! Robert says it belongs to the young gentleman

who saved you from the duchess's carriage; he picked it up after the battle."

Mrs. Oldfield opened the book with interest; judge her surprise when the first page discovered verses in Alexander's well-known hand: in the next page was a spirited drawing of Mrs. Oldfield as Sophonisba; under it was written, in gold letters, "Not one base word of Carthage on thy soul," a line the actress used to speak with such majesty and fire that the audience always burst into a round of applause. And so on, upon every page poetry or picture. The verses were more tender than those he had sent her by letter. The book was his secret heart!

It was Alexander, then, who had saved her — his love surrounded her. And how had all his devotion been repaid? She became restless — bit her lips; the book she held became a book in a mist, and she said to Susan, in bitter accents, "They had better not let the poor boy come near me again, or they will find I am a woman, in spite of my nasty blank verse and bombast. Oh! oh! oh!" and the tragedian whimpered a little, much as a housemaid whimpers; it was not at all like the "real tears" that had so affected Alexander.

On the fly-leaf of this little book was written: — "Alexander Oldworthy. Should I die — and I think I shall not live, for my love consumes me — I pray some good Christian to take this book to the great Mrs. Oldfield; it will tell her what I shall never dare to tell her: and if departed spirits are permitted to watch those they have loved, it is for her sake I shall revisit this earth, which, but for her, I should leave without regret."

"I am a miserable woman!" cried the dealer in fictitious grief. "*This is love!* I never was loved before, and mine must be the hand to stab him; they make me turn his goddess to a slut — his love to contempt; and

I do it, mad woman that I am! for what? to rob myself of the solace Heaven had sent to my vacant heart — of the only real treasure the earth contains;" and she burst into a passion of tears.

At this Susan's dried themselves; the grief of the greater mind swallowed up her puny sorrow, as the river absorbs the brook that joins it. Anne frightened her, and at last she stole from the room in dismay. Her absence, however, was short; she returned in about ten minutes, and announced a visitor.

"I will not see him!" said Mrs. Oldfield, almost fiercely, looking off the part she had begun to study.

"It is the rough gentleman!" said Susan.

"What! Alexander's father? Admit him. He is come to thank me; and well he may. Cruel wretches that we both are."

Nathan entered, but with a face so rueful, that Mrs. Oldfield saw at once gratitude had not brought him there.

"What have you done, madam?" was his first word.

"Kept my word to you, like a fool," was the answer; "I hope you are come to reproach me — it would not be complete without that!"

Nathan had come with that intention, but he was now terror-struck, and afraid to do anything of the kind. He proceeded, however, in mournful tones to tell her that Alexander had fallen into a state of despondency and desperation, which had made him — the father — regret that more innocent madness he had hitherto been so anxious to cure.

"He says he will kill himself," said Nathan. "And if he does, he will kill me: poor boy! all his illusions are kicked head over heels; so he says, however."

"A good job, too!" said Mrs. Oldfield.

"How can you say a good job, when it will be a job for Bedlam?"

"Bedlam!"

"Yes; he is mad!"

"What makes you think he is mad?"

"He says you are not beautiful! 'She has neither heart, grace, nor wit,' says he: in a word, he is insane. I reasoned calmly with him," continued the afflicted father, "I told him he was an idiot. But I am sorry to say, he answered my affectionate remonstrance with nonsense and curses, and a lot of words without head or tail to them: he is mad!"

"You cruel old man!" cried Mrs. Oldfield: "have you done nothing to soothe the poor child?"

"Oh! yes!" said the cruel old man, resenting the doubt cast upon his tenderness; "I shoved him into a room, and double-locked him in; and came straight to you for advice about him, you are so clever."

"So it seems!" said she; "I have made everybody unhappy — you, Alexander, and, most of all, myself." And tears began to well out of her lovely eyes.

"Oh, dear! — oh, dear! — oh, dear! — don't you vex yourself so, my lamb."

But the lamb, *alias* crocodile, insisted upon putting her head gracefully upon Nathan's shoulder, and crying meekly awhile. On this (a man's heart being merely a lump of sugar that melts when woman's eye lets fall a drop of warm water upon it) Nathan loved her: it was intended he should.

"I would give my right arm, if you would make him love you again; at all events a little — a very little indeed. Poor Alexander, he is a fool, a scatter-brain; and, for aught I know, a versifier; but he is my son. I have but him. If he goes mad or dies, his father will lie down and die too."

"Sir!" said the actress, with sudden cheerfulness, and drying her eyes with suspicious rapidity: "bring him

to me; and (patting him slyly on the arm) you shall see me make him love me more than ever — ten times more, if you approve, dear sir!"

"Here! he won't come: he rails at you, you are his aversion. Oh, he is mad! my son is deprived of reason: this comes of those cursed rhymes."

A pause ensued: Oldfield broke it. "I have it!" cried she; "he is an author: they are all alike! (What did she mean by that?) Speak to him of 'Berenice.'"

"Whom am I to talk to him about?"

"Berenice!"

"What, is he after another woman now?"

"No — his tragedy."

"His tragedy!"

"Ah, I forgot," said she, coolly; "you are not in the secret; he composed it by stealth in your office." She then seated herself at a side-table, and wrote a note with theatrical rapidity.

"Give him this," said she. Receiving no answer, she looked up a little surprised, and there was Nathan apoplectic with indignation; his two cheeks, red as beetroot, were puffed out; paternal tenderness was in abeyance; finally he exploded in, "So, this was how my brief-paper went;" and marched off impetuously, throwing down a chair.

"Where are you going?" remonstrated his companion.

"He is an author," was the reply; "he is no son of mine. I'll unlock him and kick him into the wide world."

"What, for consecrating your brief-paper to the Muse?"

"Yes; did you ever know a decent, respectable character write poetry?"

"Yes."

"No; that you never did! Who, now?"

"David! he wrote Hebrew poetry — the Psalms; and very beautiful poetry, too."

Poor Nathan! he was like a bull, which in the middle of a gallant charge, receives a bullet in a vital part, and so pulls up, and looks mighty stupid for a moment ere he falls.

But Nathan did not fall; he glared reproach on Mrs. Oldfield for having said a thing, which, though it did not exactly admit of immediate confutation, was absurd as well as profane, thought he, and resolved to serve Alexander out for it: he told her as much. So then ensued a little piece of private theatricals. Mrs. Oldfield, clasping her hands together, began to go gracefully down on her knees an inch at a time (nothing but great practice enabled her to do it), and remind Nathan that he was a father; that his son's life was more precious than anything; that to be angry with the unhappy was cruel. "Save him, save him!"

Poor Nathan took all this stage business for an unpremeditated effusion of the heart, and with a tear in his eye, raised the queen of crocodiles, and, with a hideously amiable grin, "I'll forgive him!" said he; "to please you I'd forgive Old Nick."

With this virtuous resolve, and equivocal compliment, he vanished from the presence chamber, and hurried towards Alexander's retreat.

Oldfield retired hastily to her bedroom, and, having found "Berenice," ran hastily through it once more, and began to study a certain scene which she thought could be turned to her purpose. Having what is called a very quick study, she was soon mistress of the twenty or thirty lines. She then put on a splendid dress, appropriate (according to the ideas of the day) to an Eastern queen. That done, she gave herself to Statira, the part

she was to play upon this important evening; but Susan observed a strange restlessness and emotion in her cousin.

"What is the matter, Anne?" said she.

"It is too bad of these men," was the answer. "I ought to be all Statira to-day, and, instead of a tragedy queen they make me feel — like a human being. This will not do; I cannot have my fictitious feelings, in which thousands are interested, endangered for such a trifle as my real ones;" and, by a stern effort, she glued her eyes to her part, and was Statira.

Meantime Nathan had returned to Alexander, and, giving him Mrs. Oldfield's note, bade him instantly accompany him to her house.

Alexander had no sooner read the note than the color rushed into his pale face, and his eye brightened; but, on reflection, he begged to be excused from going there. But his father, who had observed the above symptoms, which proved to him the power of this benevolent enchantress, would take no denial; so they returned together to her house. It was all very well the first part of the road, but, at sight of the house, poor Alexander was seized with a combination of feelings, that made it impossible for him to proceed.

"I feel faint, father."

"Lean on me."

"Pray excuse me — I will go back to Coventry with you — to the world's end — but don't take me to that house."

"Come along, ye soft-hearted milksop."

"Well, then, you must assist me, for my limbs fail me at the idea."

"Mine shall help you," — and he put an arm under his son's shoulder, and hoisted him along in an undeniable manner — and so, in a few minutes more the attorney

was to be seen half drawing, half dragging the poet into the abode of the siren, which he had first entered breathing fire and fury against play-actors to drag his son out of. It was, indeed, a curious reversal of sentiments in a brace of bosoms.

"No, father, no!" sighed Alexander, as his father pulled him into her salon.

"But I tell you it is for your tragedy," remonstrated the parchment to the paper hero. "It's business," said he, reproachfully. "Now 'tis writ, let us sell it — to greater fools than ourselves, if we can find them." The tone in which he uttered the last sentence conveyed no very sanguine hope on his part of a purchaser.

"Why did you bring me here, dear father?" sighed the *desillusioné*. "It was here my idol descended from her pedestal. O reality! you are not worth the pain of living — the toil of breathing."

"Poor boy!" thought Nathan, "he is in a bad way — the toil of breathing — well, I never! — your tragedy, lad, your tragedy," insinuated he, biting his lips not to be in a rage.

"Ah!" said Alexander, perking up, "it is the last tie that holds me to life — she says in this note that she took it for another, and that mine has merit."

"No doubt! no doubt!" said the other, humoring the absurdity — "how came the Muse (that is the wench's name, I believe) into my office?"

"She used ever to come in," began he in rapt tones, "when you went out," he added, mighty dryly.

Alexander's next casual observation was to this effect — that once he had a soul, but that now his lyre was broken.

"That's soon mended," said his rough comforter; "well, since your *liar* is cracked" —

"I said broken, father — it is broken, and for me the business of life is ended."

"Well," said the parent, whose good-humor at this crisis appears to have been inexhaustible, "since your liar is broken — smashed, I hope — and your business done, or near it, turn to amusement a bit, my poor lad."

Alexander looked at him, surveyed him from top to toe.

"Amusement!" whinnied the inconsolable one, with a ghastly chuckle — "amusement! Where can broken hearts find amusement?"

"IN THE LAW!" roared Nathan, with cheerful, hopeful, healthy tone and look. "I do," said he; then, seeing bitter incredulity on the poet, he explained, *sotto voce*, "'tisn't as if we were clients, ye fool."

"Never," shrieked Alexander.

Poor Nathan had commanded his wrath till now, but this energetic "Never" set him in a blaze.

"Never, you young scamp," shouted he, "but — but — don't put me in a passion — when I tell ye the excise-man's daughter won't have you on any other terms."

"And I won't have her, on any terms — she is a woman."

"Well, she is on the road to it — she is a girl, and a very fine one, and you are to make her a woman — and she will make a man of you, I hope."

"No more women for me," objected the poet. He then confided to an impatient parent his future plan of existence — it was simple, very simple; he purposed to live in a garret in London, hating and hated; so this brought matters to a head.

"I have been too good to you! you are mad! and, by virtue of parental authority, I seize your body, young man."

But the body had legs, and, for once, an attorney failed to effect a seizure.

He slipped under his father's arm, and getting a table between them gave vent to his despair.

"Since you are without pity," cried he, "I am lost — farewell forever!" and he rushed to the door which opened at that instant.

The father uttered a deprecatory cry, which died off into a semi-quaver of admiration — for, at this moment, a lady of dazzling beauty, arrayed in a glorious robe that swept the ground, crossed the poet's path, before he could reach the door, and, with a calm but queen-like gesture, rooted him to the spot.

She uttered but one word, but that word, as she spoke it, seemed capable of stilling the waves of the sea: —

"Hold!"

No louder than you and I speak, reader, but irresistibly. Such majesty and composure came from her, upon them, with this simple monosyllable. They stood spellbound. Alexander thought no more of flight; nor Nathan of pursuit.

At last, by one of those inspirations that convey truth more surely than human calculation is apt to, the poet cried out, "This is herself, the other was a personation!"

Berenice took no notice of this exclamation. She continued, with calm majesty, —

> "'Listen to a queen, whose steadfast will
> In chains is royal, in Rome unconquer'd still;
> O'er my bowed head though waves of sorrow roll,
> I still retain the empire of my soul.'"

Her two hearers stood spellbound. And then did Alexander taste the greatest pleasure earth affords — to be a poet, and to love a great actress, and to hear the magic lips he loved speak his own verse. Love, taste, and vanity were all gratified at once. With what rich flesh and blood she clothed his shadowy creation; the darling of his brain was little more than a skeleton; it was reserved for the darling of his heart to complete

the creation. And then his words, oh! what a majesty and glory they took from her heavenly tongue. They were words no more — they were thunderbolts of speech, and sparks of audible soul. He wondered at himself and them.

Oldfield spoke his line, —

"O'er my bowed head though waves of sorrow roll,"

with a grand though plaintive swell, like the sea itself — it was really wonderful.

Alexander had no conception he or any man had ever written so grand a line as "O'er my bowed head though waves of sorrow roll." He was in heaven. A moment like this is beyond the lot of earth, and compensates the smart that is apt to be in store, all in good time, for the poet that loves a great actress, that is to say, a creature with the tongue of an angel, the principles of a weasel, and the passions of a fish!

"And have those lips graced words of mine?" gasped Alexander. "My verses, father!"

"His verses! no!" said Nathan, addressing the actress; "can he write like the sound of a trumpet?"

"Yes! Alexander, I like your play, particularly a scene where this poor queen sacrifices her love to the barbarous prejudices of her captors."

"My favorite scene! my favorite scene! Father, she likes my favorite scene!"

"Gentlemen, be so good as to lend yourselves to the situation a moment — here, Susan!" In came Susan, her eyes very red; she had been employed realizing that Alexander was not to be hers.

"You, sir!" continued Mrs. Oldfield, addressing Nathan, "are the consul — the inexorable father."

"Oh! am I?"

"Yes! you must stand there — on that flower — like a marble pillar — deaf to all my entreaties. You are about to curse your son."

"I curse my boy? Never!"

"Father, for heaven's sake, do what she bids you."

"Dress the scene," continued she — "farther off, Susan — this is tragedy, don't huddle together as they do in farce."

"But I am in such trouble, Anne."

"Of course you are — you are Tibulla — you are jealous. You spy all our looks, catch all our words. Now, mind your *business*. The stage is mine. I speak to my Tiberias." She kicked her train adroitly out of the way, and flowed like a wave on a calm day towards Tiberias, who stood entranced, almost staggering under the weight of his own words, as they rolled over him —

"'Obey the mandate of unfeeling Rome;
Make camps your hearth, the battlefield your home;
Fly vain delights, fight for a glorious name,
Forget that e'er we met, and live for Fame.'"

(In this last line she began to falter a little.)

"'Alas! I whom lost kingdoms could not move
Am mistress of myself no more. I love!
I love you, yet we part; — my race proscribe,
My royal hand disdain this barbarous tribe.
This diadem that all the nations prize,
Is an unholy thing in Roman eyes.'"

She did not merely speak, she acted these lines. With what a world of dignity and pathos she said "my royal hand disdain," and in speaking of the "diadem," she slowly raised both hands, one somewhat higher than the other, and pointed to her coronet, for one instant. The pose would have been invaluable to sculptor or painter.

"We are in the wrong," began Nathan, soothingly, for the queen had slightly indicated him as one of "the barbarous tribe." — "A lady like you! — The Romans are fools-asses-dolts-and-beasts," cried Nathan, running the four substantives into one.

"Hush! father!" cried the author, reproachfully.

"'And you, young maid, kill not my wounded heart;
Ah! bid me not from my Tiberias part.'"

(Tears seemed to choke her utterance.)

"Oh, no! cousin," drawled out Susan, "sooner than you should die of grief — it *is* a blow, but I give him up" —

"Hold your tongue, Susan, you put me out."

"Now it is too melting," whined Nathan, "leave off — there, do ye leave off, — it is too melting."

"Isn't it?" said Alexander, radiant. "Go on! go on! You whose dry eye — you whose dry eye, Mrs. Oldfield."

Mrs. Oldfield turned full on Nathan, and sinking her voice into a deeper key, she drove the following lines slowly and surely through and through his poor, unresisting, buttery heart: —

"'You whose dry eye looks down on all our tears,
Pity yourself, — ah! for yourself have fears.
Alone upon the earth some bitter day,
You'll call your son your trembling steps to stay.
Old man! regret, remorse, will come too late;
In vain you'll pity then our sad, sad fate.'

"But, my good sir, you don't bear me out by your dumb play, — you are to be the unrelenting sire."

"Now, how ca-ca-ca-can I, when you make me blubber?" gulped out he "whose dry eye," etc.

"And me!" whined Susan.

"Aha!" cried Alexander, with a hilarious shout, "I've made them cry with my verses!"

A smile, an arch smile, wreathed the tragic queen's countenance.

Alexander caught it, and not being yet come to his full conceit, pulled himself up short: "No," cried he, "no! it was you who conquered them with my weak weapon; you, whose face is spirit, and whose voice is music. Enchantress" —

Here, Alexander, who was gracefully inclining towards the charmer, received a sudden push from the excited Nathan, and fell plump on his knees as intended.

"Speak again," cried he, "for you are my queen. I love you. What is to be my fate?"

"Alexander," said Anne, fluttering as she had never fluttered before: "you have so many titles to my esteem. Oh! no, that won't do. See, sir, he does it almost as well as I do.

'Live, for I love you;
My life is his who saved that life from harm;
This pledge attests the valor of your arm. Here, look!'"

And she returned him his pocket-book.

"His pocket-book!" said Nathan, his eyes glazed with wonder. "Why, how did his tragedy come in his pocket-book; I mean, his pocket-book in his tragedy; which is the true part, and which is the lie? Oh! dear, the dog has made his father cry, and now I have begun, I don't like to leave off, somehow." Then, before his several queries could be answered, he continued, "So this is play acting, and it's a sin! Well, then — I like it." And he dried his eyes, and cast a look of brilliant satisfaction on all the company.

He was then silent, but Alexander saw him the next minute making signals to him to put more fire and determination into his amorous proposals.

Before he could execute these instructions, a clock on the chimney-piece struck three.

The actress started, and literally bundled father and son out of the house, for in those days plays began at five o'clock.

Mrs. Oldfield, however, invited them to sup with her, conditionally; if she was not defeated in "The Rival Queens." "If I am," said she, "it will be your interest to keep out of my way; for, of course, I shall attribute it to the interruptions and distractions of this morning."

She said this with an arch, and, at the same time, rather wicked look, and Alexander's face burned in a moment.

"Oh," cried he, "I should be miserable for life."

"Should you?" said Anne.

"You know I must."

"Well, then (and a single gleam of lightning shot from her eyes), I must not be defeated."

At five o'clock the theatre was packed to the ceiling, and the curtain rose upon "The Rival Queens," about which play much nonsense has been talked. It is true, there is bombast in it, and one or two speeches that smack of Bedlam; but there is not more bombast than in other plays of the epoch, and there is ten times as much fire. The play has also some excellent turns of language and some great strokes of nature; in particular the representation of two different natures agitated to the utmost by the same passion, jealousy, is full of genius.

"The Rival Queens" is a play for the stage, not the closet. Its author was a great reader, and the actors who had the benefit of his reading charmed the public in all the parts, but in process of time actors arose who had not that advantage, and "Alexander the Great"

became too much for them. They could not carry off his smoke or burn with his fire. The female characters, however, retained their popularity for many years after the death of the author, and of Betterton, the first Alexander. They are the two most equal female characters that exist in one tragedy. Slight preference is commonly given by actors to the part of Roxana, but when Mrs. Bracegirdle selected that part, Mrs. Oldfield took Statira with perfect complacency.

The theatre was full — the audience in an unusual state of excitement.

The early part of the first act received but little attention. At length Statira glided on the scene. She was greeted with considerable applause; in answer to which she did not duck and grin, according to rule, but sweeping a rapid yet dignified courtesy, she barely indicated her acknowledgments, remaining Statira.

"'Give me a knife, a draught of poison, flames!
Swell, heart! break, break, thou stubborn thing!'"

Her predecessors had always been violent in this scene. Mrs. Oldfield made distress its prominent sentiment. The critics thought her too quiet, but she stole upon the hearts of the audience, and enlisted their sympathy on her side before the close of the act.

Mrs. Bracegirdle, who stood at the wing during the scene, turned round to her toady, and said, shrugging her shoulders, "Oh, if that is all the lady can do!"

In the third act Mrs. Bracegirdle made her *entrée* with great spirit, speaking, as she came on, the line —

"'Oh, you have ruined me! I shall be mad!'"

She was received with great applause, on which she instantly dropped Roxana, and became Mrs. B., all wreathed in smiles; the applause being ended, she re-

turned to Roxana as quickly as it is possible to do after such a deviation. She played the scene with immense spirit and fire, and the applause was much greater than Statira had obtained in the first act.

Applause is the actor's test of success.

The two queens now came into collision, and their dialogue is so dramatic that I hope I may be excused for quoting it, with all its faults.

Roxana. Madam, I hope you will a queen forgive:
Roxana weeps to see Statira grieve;
How noble is the brave resolve you make,
To quit the world for Alexander's sake!
Vast is your mind, you dare thus greatly die,
And yield the king to one so mean as I;
'Tis a revenge will make the victor smart,
And much I fear your death will break his heart.

Statira. You counterfeit, I fear, and know too well
How much your eyes all beauties else excel:
Roxana, who though not a princess born,
In chains could make the mighty victor mourn.
Forgetting power when wine had made him warm,
And senseless, yet even then you knew to charm:
Preserve him by those arts that cannot fail,
While I the loss of what I love bewail.

Roxana. I hope your majesty will give me leave
To wait you to the grove, where you would grieve;
Where, like the turtle, you the loss will moan
Of that dear mate, and murmur all alone.

Statira. No, proud triumpher o'er my falling state,
Thou shalt not stay to fill me with my fate;
Go to the conquest which your wiles may boast,
And tell the world you left Statira lost.
Go seize my faithless Alexander's hand,
Both hand and heart were once at my command;
Grasp his lov'd neck, die on his fragrant breast,
Love him like me whose love can't be express'd,
He must be happy, and you more than blest;

While I in darkness hide me from the day,
That with my mind I may his form survey,
And think so long, till I think life away.
Roxana. No, sickly virtue, no,
Thou shalt not think, nor thy love's loss bemoan,
Nor shall past pleasures through thy fancy run.
That were to make thee blest as I can be;
But thy no-thought I must, I will decree;
As thus, I'll torture thee till thou art mad,
And then no thought to purpose can be had.
Statira. How frail, how cowardly is woman's mind!
We shriek at thunder, dread the rustling wind,
And glitt'ring swords the brightest eyes will blind;
Yet when strong jealousy inflames the soul,
The weak will roar, and calms to tempests roll.
Rival, take heed, and tempt me not too far;
My blood may boil, and blushes show a war.
Roxana. When you retire to your romantic cell,
I'll make thy solitary mansion hell!
Thou shalt not rest by day, nor sleep by night,
But still, Roxana shall thy spirit fright;
Wanton in dreams if thou dar'st dream of bliss,
Thy roving ghost may think to steal a kiss;
But when to his sought bed thy wand'ring air
Shall for the happiness it wished repair,
How will it groan to find thy rival there?
How ghastly wilt thou look when thou shalt see,
Through the drawn curtains that great man and me,
Wearied with laughing joys that shot to the soul,
While thou shalt grinning stand, and gnash thy teeth, and howl!
Statira. O barb'rous rage! my tears I cannot keep,
But my full eyes in spite of me will weep.
Roxana. The king and I in various pictures drawn,
Clasping each other, shaded o'er with lawn,
Shall be the daily presents I will send,
To help thy sorrow to her journey's end;
And when we hear at last thy hour draws nigh,
My Alexander, my dear love, and I,

Will come and hasten on thy lingering fates,
And smile and kiss thy soul out through the grates.
Statira. 'Tis well, I thank thee; thou hast waked a rage,
Whose boiling now no temper can assuage;
I meet thy tides of jealousy with more,
Dare thee to duel, and dash thee o'er and o'er.
Roxana. What would you dare?
Statira. Whatever you dare do,
My warring thoughts the bloodiest tracks pursue;
I am by love a fury made, like you;
Kill or be killed, thus acted by despair.
Roxana. Sure the disdain'd Statira does not dare?
Statira. Yes, tow'ring proud Roxana, but I dare.
Roxana. I tow'r indeed o'er thee;
Like a fair wood, the shade of kings I stand,
While thou, sick weed, dost but infest the land.
Statira. No, like an ivy I will curl thee round,
Thy sapless trunk of all its pride confound,
Then dry and wither'd, bend thee to the ground.
What Sisygambis' threats, objected fears,
My sister's sighs, and Alexander's tears,
Could not effect, thy rival rage has done;
My soul, whose start at breach of oaths begun,
Shall to thy ruin violated run.
I'll see the king in spite of all I swore,
Tho' cursed, that thou may'st never see him more.

In this female duel Statira appeared to great advantage. She exhibited the more feminine character of the two. The marked variety of sentiment she threw into each speech, contrasted favorably with the other's somewhat vixenish monotony; and every now and then she gave out volcanic flashes of great power, all the more effective for the artful reserve she had hitherto made of her physical resources. The effect was electrical when she, the tender woman, suddenly wheeled upon her opponent with the words "Rival, take heed," etc. And now came the climax; now it was that Mrs. Bracegirdle paid

for her temporary success. She had gone to the end of her tether long ago, but her antagonist had been working on the great principle of art — Climax. She now put forth the strength she had economized; at each speech she rose and swelled higher, and higher, and higher. Her frame dilated, her voice thundered, her eyes lightened, and she swept the audience with her in the hurricane of her passion. There was a moment's dead silence, and then the whole theatre burst into acclamations, which were renewed again and again ere the play was suffered to proceed. At the close of the scene Statira had overwhelmed Roxana; and, as here she had electrified the audience, so in the concluding passage of the play she melted them to tears — the piteous anguish of her regret at being separated by death from her lover.

"'What, must I lose my life, my lord, forever?'"

And then her pitying tenderness for his sorrow; and then her prayer to him to live; and, last, that exquisite touch of woman's love, more angelic than man's —

"'Spare Roxana's life;
'Twas love of you that caused her give me death;'"

and her death with no thought but love, love, love, upon her lips; all this was rendered so tenderly and so divinely, that no heart was untouched, and few eyes were dry now in the crowded theatre. Statira died; the other figures remained upon the stage, but to the spectators the play was over; and when the curtain fell there was but one cry — "Oldfield!" "Oldfield!"

In those days people conceived opinions of their own in matters dramatic, and expressed them then and there. *Roma locuta est*, and Nance Oldfield walked into her dressing-room the queen of the English stage.

Two figures in the pit had watched this singular battle with thrilling interest. Alexander sympathized alternately with the actress and the queen. Nathan, after hanging his head most sheepishly for the first five minutes, yielded wholly to the illusion of the stage, and was "transported out of this ignorant present" altogether; to him Roxana and Statira were *bonâ fide* queens, women, and rivals. The Oldworthys were seated in critic's row; and after awhile Nathan's enthusiasm and excitement disturbed old gentlemen who came to judge two actresses, not to drink poetry all alive O.

His neighbors proposed to eject Nathan; the said Nathan on this gave them a catalogue of actions, any one of which, he said, would re-establish his constitutional rights and give him his remedy in the shape of damages: he wound up with letting them know he was an attorney-at-law. On this they abandoned the idea of meddling with him as hastily as boys drop the baked half-pence in a scramble provided by their philanthropical seniors. So now Mrs. Oldfield was queen of the stage, and Alexander had access to her as her admirer, and Nathan had a long private talk with her, and then with some misgivings went down to Coventry.

A story ought to end with a marriage: ought it not? Well, this one does not, because there are reasons that compel the author to tell the truth. The poet did not marry the actress and beget tragedies and comedies. Love does not always end in marriage, even behind the scenes of a theatre. But it led to a result, the value of which my old readers know, and my young ones will learn — it led to a very tender and life-long friendship. And, oh! how few out of the great aggregate of love affairs lead to so high, or so good, or so affectionate a permanency as is a tender friendship.

One afternoon Mrs. Oldfield wrote rather a long letter thus addressed in the fashion of the day: —

To Mr. Nathan Oldworthy,
Attorney at-Law,
In the Town of Coventry,
At his house there in the Market street.
This, with all despatch.

Nathan read it, and said, "God forgive me for thinking ill of any people because of their business," and his eyes filled.

The letter described to Nathan an interview the actress had with Alexander. That interview (several months after our tale) was a long, and at some moments a distressing one, especially to poor Alexander: but it had been long meditated, and was firmly carried out; in that interview this generous woman conferred one of the greatest benefactions on Alexander one human being can hope to confer on another. She persuaded a dramatic author to turn attorney. He was very reluctant then, and very grateful afterwards. These two were never to one another as though all had never been. They were friends as long as they were on earth together. This was not so very long. Alexander lived to eighty-six; but the great Oldfield died at forty-seven. Whilst she lived, she always consulted her Alexander in all difficulties. One day she sent for him: and he came sadly to her bedside: it was to make her will. He was sadder than she was. She died. She lay in state, like a royal queen; and noblemen and gentlemen vied to hold her pall as they took her to the home she had earned in Westminster Abbey. Alexander, faithful to the last, carried out all her last requests: and he tried, poor soul, to rescue her fame from the cruel fate that awaits the great artists of the scene — oblivion. He

wrote her epitaph. It is first-rate of its kind; and prime Latin for once in a way: —

Hic juxta requiescit
Tot inter Poetarum laudata nomina
ANNA OLDFIELD.
Nec ipsa minore laude digna.
Nunquam ingenium idem ad partes
Diversissimas nobilius fuit:
Ita tamen ut ad singulas
Non facta sed nata esse videretur.
In Tragœdiis
Formæ splendor, oris dignitas, incessûs majestas,
Tantâ vocis suavitate temperabantur
Ut nemo esset tam agrestis tam durus spectator
Quin in admirationem totus reperetur.
In Comœdia autem
Tanta vis, tam venusta hilaritas,
Tam curiosa felicitas,
Ut neque sufficerent spectando oculi,
Neque plaudendo manus.

There, brother, I have done what I can for your sweetheart, and I have reprinted your epitaph after one hundred years.

But neither you nor I, nor all our pens, can fight against the laws that rule the arts. Each of the great arts fails in something, is unapproachably great in others. The great artists of the scene are paid in cash; they cannot draw bills at fifty years' date.

They are meteors that blaze in the world's eye, and vanish.

We are farthing candles that cast a gleam all around four yards square for hours and hours.

Alexander lived a life of business, honest, honorable, and graceful, too; for the true poetic feeling is ineradicable — it colors a man's life — is not colored by it.

And when he had reached a great old age, it befell that Alexander's sight grew dim, and his spirit was weary of the great city, and his memory grew weak, and he forgot parchments, and dates, and reports, and he began to remember as though it was yesterday the pleasant fields, where he had played among the lambs and the buttercups in the morning of his days. And the old man said calmly, "*Vixi!* Therefore now I will go down, and see once more those pleasant fields; and I will sit in the sun a little while; and then I will lie beside my father in the old churchyard." And he did so. It is near a hundred years ago now.

So Anne Oldfield sleeps in Westminster Abbey, near the poets whose thoughts took treble glory from her while she adorned the world; and Alexander Oldworthy lies humbly beneath the shadow of the great old lofty spire in the town of Coventry.

Requiescat in pace!

"And all Christian souls, I pray Heaven."